ANTHOLOGY
OF MAGAZINE VERSE
FOR 1921

BY

WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

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ANTHOLOGY
OF
MAGAZINE VERSE
FOR 1921

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FOR 1921

AND YEAR BOOK OF AMERICAN POETRY

EDITED BY
WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

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TO
MY FRIEND
ARTHUR H. HAYWARD
A NEW ENGLANDER AND
LOVER OF HER PERFECTIONS
IN
THE ANTIQUE

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INTRODUCTION

Reflections:

What makes an American poetry is a question that has never been and can never be solved by criticism. It is time that we repudiate the concept of what is American that was held, we will say, about the middle of the last century before the great flood of emigration from Europe began or we must set up positively a new concept of that word. The idea of Americanism, certainly during and especially since the end of the World War, has been in solution. The idea of Americanism is, in face of much contrary emphasis, a matter of psychology rather than political. The suggestion of the difference here vaguely remarked is too complicated to be pursued, and is referred to merely to bring over into the domain of poetry some fundamental inquiries regarding the character of "American poetry."

I suppose that any art may be considered American which conforms in expression to the ideals of the American people. But who are the American people who create or preserve these ideals? It must be admitted that the descendents of the original founders of the Nation are at present in a numerical minority. Do their ideals prevail? Or have their ideals been modified by the majority who are the descendents of immigrants of the last two or three generations? The great political and social effort during the last few years has been to inoculate the great non-Saxon strain with the ideal of the founders of the Nation who are represented to-day by the minority population. After all this is the hue and cry of Americanism. A hue and cry losing its vigor against the persistent modification of American institutions by the new-comers and their

descendents. It is not intellect that has brought this about; less has it been due to education; it has been due to character and character is the expression of habits and ideas which cannot be changed in the brief period of a few generations.

To get at the character of an American Poetry then, we must understand these forces which have been at work upon our national experiences. It is interesting in light of what I have said to quote this passage from a letter which I received from an interested reader of these anthologies. "In the 1920 Anthology," it runs, "you speak of we Americans as being without a 'tap-root' in literature. I know we are young, yet it seems to me that if the real hundred per-cent American writers were encouraged the 'root' would respond by a greater depth of growth and in time we would have an American literature, and I am going to suggest that you in the 1921 Anthology select writers as nearly American as possible in name and in harmony with our country—make this issue *American* in every way—descendents of the New England and New York and Pennsylvania and Virginia settlers.

"I have all the books you have compiled and it seems to me there are more new names of people who are not Americans, than Americans, and I am so good an American that I want us to have the first place in our literature. I do not like the melting-pot process—we really have writers who have ability and though not perfect as to literary finish, they write of things as they hear and see them and because it is the land they love—not for effect. I hope you will feel I do not mean this in criticism but as a real deeply felt plea for our people, and our America and I hope you will select from more magazines and less of the writings of the few as in especially 1919 and 1920 books."

The sentiment expressed in this amounts to a conviction though strongly and surreptitiously held is being over-borne by the changing conceptions of the

the light of psychological truth upon the literary ideals of Americanism. It is interesting to throw conflict that is waging around this ideal. Gustave Le Bon remarks in his latest book that "If it is difficult to understand the mentality of a people, this is because its literary, artistic and scientific productions, which reveal its intelligence, do not by any means interpret its character. Now, a man's behavior depends upon his character not upon his intellect, and there is no parallelism between these two regions of personality."

It is the superficial belief of some critics that "American" poetry has its ideal and embodiment in Walt Whitman. It has been impossible for them to distinguish the fact that Whitman was only a rebel in form and not in ideas and substance. His radicalism consisted in breaking up forms merely as a chemical process to hold and shape the new solutions of his ideas of American democracy. This process was in keeping with the evolutionary tradition of the Saxon peoples. Whitman was not then a revolutionist, as so many of his non-Saxon disciples of to-day believe. In our current art it is very easily determined by name those poets whose art express evolutionary principles of substance and ideas and those who express revolutionary social doctrines. The question of form scarcely matters; for though Masters, Amy Lowell, Vachel Lindsay, John Gould Fletcher, John Hall Wheelock, and H. D., to name a few of the best, are often radical in form, in substance they carry on the evolutionary principle of the Saxon traditions. Add Frost, Robinson and Aiken, to their names and you get the Saxon continuity of poetic spirit. How much or how little you may like their themes or their qualities of vision, these poets are constructive. Now, the revolutionists tumble out of the category of this Saxon nomenclature. Sandburg, Oppenheim, Untermeyer, Giovannitti, Rosenfeld, and the increasing number of Russian

names that are invading the table of contents and title pages.

I come to no conclusion as to what is to-day, or what may be to-morrow, American poetry. It may or may not follow the crystallization of "an American language." These reflections, I hope, serve merely to call some attention to the fact that there is an influence more mystical than the average critic gives credit for being which is reshaping the foundation of our poetic ideals and visions. In the art of poetry as well as in our national temper, there is a psychologic conflict taking place which may be revealed in the words of Gustave Le Bon when he says that "in addition to the shifting elements of the individual character there are extremely stable ancestral elements established by the past. Strong enough to limit the oscillations of personality, they immediately establish national unity in times of crisis."

W. S. B.

Arlington Heights
Massachusetts

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I wish, also, to thank the *Boston Transcript Company* for permission to use material which appeared in my annual review of American poetry in the columns of *The Evening Transcript.*

To the following publishers I am indebted for the privilege of using the poems named from the volumes in which they have been included, and which have been published before the appearance of this *Anthology:*

The Macmillan Company: "The Long Race," "Vain Gratuities," "Lost Anchors," "Monadnock Through the Trees," in *Collected Poems* by Edwin Arnold Robinson; and "The Dark Cup," in *Flame and Shadow* by Sara Teasdale.

Houghton, Mifflin Company: "Purchased," in *Cobble Stones and Clouds* by Hortense Flexner.

B. W. Huebsch: "Altitude," "After Storm," "Cactus Seed," in *Sun-up* by Lola Ridge.

The Four Seas Company: "The Vanished Years," in *Willow-Pollen* by Jeanette Marks.

TO ONE WHO ASKS

Curious you should not see my feet are weary—
Weary of the way you see so fair—
As wondering you look along each silver path with question
Why I will not tread.

Curious you should not see my eyes are weary,
Weary of the sorrow and the passion they have seen;
Asking now to close, the last kiss given,
The last word said.

Curious you should not see my hands are weary,
Weary with their ceaseless fluttering round little things;
Concerned no longer with caresses nor with loving,
Still and uncomforted.

Your young desire would take away my sorrow,
Do you not see I have but ashes for you?
I would not lay upon your eager breast
My weary head.

Your feet are hurrying, your soul is hungering—
You of the intent eyes, the questing will.
Why do you ask my two tired, empty hands
To give you bread?

You will not see my very soul is weary—
I think it died long, long ago, or fled.
Would you ask caresses from a shadow-woman—
Kisses from the dead?

RAIN

I never knew how words were vain
  Until I strove to say
The thoughts that fell like the grey rain
  Upon my heart today.

The April rain falls on the earth,
  That waits a while for words,
And then becomes articulate
  In buds and bees and birds.

The thoughts that rain upon my heart
  Bring nothing fair to birth;
Oh God, I kneel before the art,
  Of this great lyrist, earth.

Contemporary Verse *Kenneth Slade Alling*

ON THE PASSING OF THE LAST FIRE HORSE FROM MANHATTAN ISLAND

I remember the cleared streets, the strange suspense
  As if a thunder-storm were under way;
Magnificently furious, hurrying thence,
  The fire-eyed horses racing to the fray;
Out of old Homer where the heroes are,
  Beating upon the whirlwind thunderous hoofs,
Wild horses and plumed Ajax in his car:
  Oh, in those days we still possest the proofs
Men battled shouting by the gates of Troy,
  With shields of triple brass and spears of flame.
With what distended nostrils, what fierce joy,
  What ring on stone and steel, those horses came.
Like horses of gods that whirl to the dawn's burning,
  They came, and they are gone, and unreturning.

The New York Evening Post *Kenneth Slade Alling*

ECSTASY

I could never be properly dead,
For even alone in my grave,
These songs would go on in my head,
And May in my veins would rave.

No grief or sorrow or pain
Could bind me utterly down;
I should go shout with the rain,
And burst, with June, through the town.

No ancient hurt of the stars,
That scarred my heart at its birth,
Could ever make silent in me,
The songs that I sing for the earth.

Kenneth Slade Alling
The Midland, A Magazine of the Middle West

ST. AGNES' MORNING

Between the dawn and the sun's rising
She could not sleep, so the blood stirred in her;
She could not, and in the cold morning
Woke with the white curtains' stir.

Between the dawn and the river's flaming
She folded a curtain toward the sea,
And, bending, lifted silks together
In the cold light, dubiously.

In the cold air, pulsing the curtain,
She lifted silks; and let them fall.
In the wind she bent above them
Hearing their rustling musical.

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Between the dawn and silver morning
She could not sleep, so the blood dinned
With the river's silver and the sea's silence
And the wind.

The New Republic *Maxwell Anderson*

EMPTYING ASHES

The leaves blow like ghosts through the blur of
lamplight
And gather in the wind at the foot of the wall;
Bare trees breathe in the wind with silverly singing;
Save for the street lamps flinging
Long level rays there are no stars seen at all.

And no man goes or comes; the houses are silent;
They have all withdrawn within from the cold rain,
Pulled down the blinds, and drawn up chairs to the
fire,
Each to his own desire,
Knowing the wind only as winter wind again.

Winter, a furnace to tend, ashes to empty,
A banking of many fires, the evenings longer—
While the land is turned to the stars, the sea to the
sun;
And mile by mile, one by one,
The rivers pause; and the tug of storms is stronger.

At the base of the wall the leaves lift in the wind's
whirl;
The clouds pour over the sky; behind them rides
Somewhere a quiet moon, swift and dark,
Cutting its changeless arc,
Calling the tides we know, called by unknown tides.

I could step out on the rain, leave this darkness.
Blaze a path through the cool deserts of time,
Descend from sun to sun, from ledge to ledge,
Slip out beyond the edge,
And lose the earth like a forgotten crime.

I could turn within, follow curious shadows
Through the interminably opening doors,
Finding a thousand griefs, old scents and laughter,
Hung, cob-web like to rafters,
And secret springs, blank corridors, and haunted
floors.

The leaves blow like ghosts through the blur of lamp-
light.
And gather in the wind at the foot of a wall;
Well, I am weary, these days seem dusty, lonely,
So much distance only,
And I empty the ashes, watching the leaves, after all.

The New Republic *Maxwell Anderson*

RHAPSODY

As when trees are shrouded in December,
Men recall the perfumes of the flower-time;
So we sing a life we half remember:
How we heard in some primeval shower-time
Liquid song of rain upon blue rivers;
Dreamed on isles, in windless oceans planted,
Where a dim-green twilight, bird enchanted,
Under domes of drooping leafage quivers;
How we climbed on many a hidden planet
Eagle heights stirred by a starry breeze;
Watched by coffined kings in tombs of granite,
Where the darkness hangs like boughs of trees,
Glimpsing in the reddening light of torches

Ghosts of somber vaults and looming porches,
Cyclopean faces, giant knees;
How we anchored in a violet haven,
Seeking under light of unknown stars
Mountains paler than the moonlight, graven
Into shapes of pinnacles and scars;
Where our boat set all the lilies swinging,
Sailed up rivers hushed and leafy-arbored,
And, in caves of hanging blossom harbored,
Heard the sound of an immortal singing.

As when breathed upon, the ashen ember
Blossoms into fire again and fades,
So bright Junes flame up through our December,
And at random whiles we half remember
Sudden gusts of an immortal singing,
Ancient visions of remote crusades.

The Century Magazine *Martin Armstrong*

FEMININE TALK

First Woman. Do you share the present dread
Of being sentimental?
The world has flung its boutonnière
Into the mud, and steps upon it
With elaborate gestures!
Certain people do this neatly,
Using solemn words for consolation:
Others angrily stamp their feet,
Striving to prove their strength.
Second Woman. Sentimentality
Is the servant-girl of certain men
And the wife of others.
She scarcely ever flirts
With creative minds,

Striving also to become
Graceful and indiscreet.

First Woman. Sappho and Aristotle
Have wandered through the centuries,
Dressed in an occasional novelty—
A little twist of outward form.
They have always been ashamed
To be caught in a friendly talk.

Second Woman. When emotion and the mind
Engage in deliberate conservation,
One hundred nightingales
And intellectuals find a common ground,
And curse the meeting of their slaves!

First Woman. The mind must only play
With polished relics of emotion,
And the heart must never lighten
Burdens of the mind.

Second Woman. I desire to be
Irrelevant and voluble,
Leaving my terse disgust for a moment.
I have met an erudite poet.
With a northern hardness
Motionless beneath his youthful robes.
He shuns the quivering fluencies
Of emotion, and shifts his dominoes
Within a room of tortured angles.
But away from this creative room
He sells himself to the whims
Of his wife, a young virago
With a calculating nose.
Beneath the flagrant pose
Of his double life
Emotion and the mind
Look disconsolately at each other.

First Woman. Lyrical abandon
And mental cautiousness
Must not mingle to a magic
Glowing, yet deliberate!

Second Woman. Never spill your wine
Upon a page of mathematics.
Drink it decently
Within the usual tavern.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Maxwell Bodenheim*

PINE TREES

The pine trees patiently unstitch
The brightness of this afternoon,
But while they work their pungent thoughts
Are longing for the dulcet moon.

The pine trees only live at night
When moonlight brings them silver eyes;
Throughout the day they stand like blind
Green beggars, uttering restless cries.

At night they listen to the words
Of winds from far-off mountain rims,
And feel the reckless grief that springs
From those who stand with prisoned limbs.

The Literary Review *Maxwell Bodenheim*
N. Y. Evening Post

CARTOONS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

I. Mirabeau

You must have shocked your father when you came,
Club-footed, pimpled. 'Twas for him as when
A gardener finds a crooked root to tend;
He feared the flower would stink and bring him shame.
He did not want your morals to be lame
At least. It was the same old thing again. . . .
Revolt has always claimed the best in men
And so you cried, "God damn the family name!"

And yet how sad a thing it was for France. . . .
You spent just half your strength to make France free
And half in jail through women and the dance.
And at the cry, "To arms!" you did but see
A dearer challenge in a haughty glance,
Behind the throne the lips of Queen Marie.

II. Theroigne de Mericourt

You taught more economics than a tome
Contains, you women marching on Versailles.
You were not there to save a world, or try.
Your theory was the simple monochrome
Of hunger, black as crusts you ate at home.
And either you or Louis had to die.
That simpler thinker only blinked his eye
Like Nero fiddling in the flames of Rome.

And you, Theroigne, there where none had grown,
Led forth a Reason: Women crying, "Bread,"
Plain women in the rain before a throne.
Assemblies talked, you knew not what they said.
You taught us there that hunger is the stone
We bear or hurl till we or kings fall dead.

The Measure — *Stirling Bowen*

MY GHOSTS

My house is filled with ghosts—
Ghosts of all sorts that sing and dance,
And fill the halls with laughter gay,
And other ghosts that are content
To be philosophers,
And point the way to peace and happiness.
Grim ghosts are there,
Wan specters they of tragedy,
Despairing in their mien,
Compellers all of gloom,
Who fill me full of horror as they pass;
The which, when grown too tense
With contemplation of their evil ways,
I turn away from, summoning
Some ghosts of lyric song to ease the strain,
And find serenity
The while he, smiling, sings to me.
The ghosts of all the famous folk of history
Are there:
Wise Solomon and Charlemagne
And Pericles and Plato; Socrates,
And all the singers of the glory that was Greece
And Rome;
Columbus, Cabot, and their crews,
And Raleigh, brave pathfinders to our newer world;
Sad Louis, and Robespierre of greenish eyes,
The pallid Nemesis of kings;
And he who lost at Waterloo
Comes now and then, and back to glory stalks,
Rehearsing for my thrill the deeds of Lodi's bridge
And Austerlitz;
While Washington's own self strides nobler by,
Crowned with the greener bays
Of his unselfishness;
And Lincoln, heart of godlike mold,
Comes hauntingly to stir
My soul alternately to laughter and to tears.

The noblest thinkers of recorded time
They, too, come by,
And none too bent on more important things
To pause at my behest
And grant to me the ripened fruits
Of their vast cogitations.
And when my faith by some doubt is besieged,
The valiant hosts of followers of the light,
The saintly heroes of the word,
Responding to my call,
Troop in from out the past, and circling me about,
The torch of truth upraised,
Drive forth mine enemy, who never hath withstood
Its splendent flame.
And so the list runs on.
The ghosts of every age are there,
And at the moment of my need,
For cheer, for knowledge, or for sympathy,
They rise at summons and, dismissed, depart,
Not to return until again I call them forth
From off those bending shelves
Whereon,
Within the covers of my books,
They dwell, to bless me with their gifts
Of story and of song,
In payment for my reverent love of them.

The Century Magazine *John Kendrick Bangs*

THE LORD SPEAKS

God said to the Puritan
As He stood on the bank of His river:
"I told you to swim to me;
You builded a bridge of stone
To bring back the Soul to the Giver.
Your timorous, dry-shod plan
Was well enough in its way,
But you wrestled and toiled alone,
And your work was heavier far,
And now you will have to stay
On the bank till you learn to play—
Old and stiff as you are."

God said to the drowning Sinner:
"I told you to swim to me.
But you played and played in the stream,
And you stayed and stayed in the stream,
And you laughed at the ones who said
You might stay in the water too long.
And now you are cramped and cold,
And you will go down in the stream.
And then, fished out of the slime,
I must leave you to air and dry,
Wasting eternal Time
Hung on a thorn, to sigh
While measureless years go by."

God called to the Swimmer-with-Glee,
God called to the Laden-and-Weary,
"Swim to me, swim to me!
Dear,
I am a shady Tree
For those who rest from the River."

The Yale Review *Karle Wilson Baker*

BRIEF LIFE

Brief as the creaming waves that break and run
  Back to the deep, as butterflies that flitter
  From flower to flower, as icicles that glitter
Their keen defiance to the fatal sun;
Brief as from tiny breast of cinnamon
  The bluebird's warble, or the swallow's twitter,
  This life of ours. Though it be sweet or bitter,
'Tis but a wing-beat and the flight is done.

Yet on the lip the billow's windy froth
  Tastes of the sea; summer is in the call
Of bird, in airy motion of the moth.
  There sparkles in that fragile crystal lance
  The miracle of light. 'Tis but a glance
  And we are gone; yet the least life holds all.

The Yale Review — *Katharine Lee Bates*

WINTER BURIAL

Earth, will you be kind to her?
I give her back . . .

Will your clumsy ricks and clay
Break her silk and pearl and ivory
To trash? . . .

. . . or shall I see a little creeping flush
of first flowers along that slope
next Spring?

The North American Review — *Henry Bellamann*

SAND HILLS

The world is spread with rough grained silk,
crumpled a little where the sky indents it
and cuts off the view.

The very old gods,
long since tired of northern lights
and seas too jeweled
and snows too glittering,—
tired, too, of men,—
the very old gods come here
in the late evening
to sit quietly on the warm gray silk
and rest their eyes
with milky opal tints
and the smoky blue
flecked by the dim fire of giant stars.

The Measure — *Henry Bellamann*

"JUNKETS," IMMORTAL*

"What has become of Junkets I know not. I suppose Queen Mab has eaten him."
—Leigh Hunt to Charles Cowden Clarke, July 1, 1817.
[*"Junkets" was his intimates' affectionate nickname for John Keats, applied to his exurberance of spirit.*]

What has become of "Junkets"? I know well.
The goldfinch, the wildbriar, the elm-trees know.
The secret's one the sunset burns to tell.
The gossiping brooks divulge it as they flow.
The tranced white clouds convey it; tattle-tale
Is every leaf in every woodland ride.
Sunlight on dappled lane and grassy swale
Smiles it to all the English countryside.

He did not die nigh to the Spanish stairs
In drowsing Rome, even if his dust is hid
Under her violets, his last despairs
At rest beside the Cestian pyramid.
That valiant spirit wherein all beauty quivered
Outlives forever the failing brain and heart
Consumed by love when lightning many-rivered
Descended on the altar of his art.

And summer's wind that runs the rippling barley
(Watched by his hazel eyes with such delight),
Bees on the foxglove bloom in buzzing parley,
The flickering shadow of a swallow's flight,
Hold him more closely now than all his glories
Of marbled myth, all that our world esteems
Of jewelled language in those enchanted stories
He wove on purple tapestry of dreams.

Now he exults in all the secret raptures
Of earth, all color and fragrance near or far,—
Flows through the flaming sunset, storms and captures
The throbbing, luminous heart of every star.
The flowers, the clouds, the birds are his in keeping.
They brighten beneath that swift and viewless wing.
His is all summer's shining, all autumn's weeping,
All the wild virginal ardor of the spring.

* *This poem in commemoration of the Centenary of John Keats was read before the Authors' Club of New York on Thursday, February 24.*

The Literary Review — *William Rose Benét*
N. Y. Evening Post

A BANQUET:

One Memory from Socrates

After the song the love, and after the love the play,
Flute girl and pretty boy blowing
Bubbles of sparkling
Wine into darkling
Beards of a former austerity, stern even now, but
fast growing
Foolish, with less of the stately
Reserve that held them sedately.
Oh Zeus, what a sight! with the wine dripping off it,
The grin of an ass on a bald-pated prophet.

After the feast the night, and after the night the day,
Fool and philosopher stirring
With the day dawning,
Stretching and yawning,
While in each wine-throbbing, desolate brain is the
wheeling and whirring
Of thousands of bats, that the slaking
Of throats will not hinder from aching,
No wine for the brow that is beating to bursting,
But water at morning is quench for the thirsting!

The Boston Transcript *Ernest Benshimol*

THE WIFE'S SONG

When I awake
And hear my heart call loudly at my breast,
Stirred with the dream that vanishes away,
When all the night is resonant with unrest
And gates of darkness stand before the day
I worship you.

When the years
Have left us silent by the unending road
I will not mock at death nor call it soon,
I will not wake again the living goad!
But at this moment give me the vanished moon,
I fear the night!

"Stir and smile."
You do not hear: I have not spoken so,
But from my heart the wish of it all has sped.
I *dare* not speak; the unearthly sound might go,
Return unheard, and tell me you are dead.
I dare not speak.

Love of mine,
What is the torrent white that falters, falls
Far downward, wakened from its misty dream,
Crashing over the rugged mountain walls,
What is the cataract without the stream,
Or what am I?

What am I
Unless you wake and draw me to you now,
Unless you banish the dust of dreams and press
These trembling lips of mine, unless you vow
Love's endless promise in your dear caress,
Oh what am I?

The Boston Transcript *Ernest Benshimol*

THE HUNCHBACK

I saw a hunchback climb over a hill,
Carrying slops for the pigs to swill.

The snow was hard, the air was frore,
And he cast a bluish shadow before.

Over the frozen hill he came,
Like one who is neither strong nor lame;

And I saw his face as he passed me by,
And the hateful look of his dead-fish eye:

His face, like the face of a wrinkled child
Who has never laughed or played or smiled.

I watched him till his work was done;
And suddenly God went out of the sun,

Went out of the sun without a sound
But the great pigs trampling the frozen ground.

The hunchback turned and retracked the snows;
But where God's gone, there's no man knows.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *John Peale Bishop*

MY DELIGHT

Thick and stormy was the night,
Not a single star,
When I climbed to my delight,
Where the roses are;

Where the roses are and love,
In a bower warm,
Climbing up to heaven above
Night and wind and storm.

Contemporary Verse *Gamaliel Bradford*

WHOLESOME HELL

If praying to the saints could comfort,
Bribing with candle or with vow,
They might ensconce my soul in some fort
More sure and safe than I know now.

To kneel before a tawdry altar,
Propitiate a wooden Christ—
If this could strengthen hopes that falter,
My pride were fitly sacrificed.

But heathen god and Roman martyr
And Calvin's Trinity as well
Have wholly forfeited their charter.—
I yearn at times for wholesome hell.

Contemporary Verse — *Gamaliel Bradford*

WARNING

Ask me nothing now, my dear—
The stars are all too large and near;
At dusk the peepers in the pool
Make my pulses play the fool;
Robins with morning winds awake
And in my spirit barriers break;
The willows are too golden green,
The grasses are too young and clean,
The little brooks too loud and swift;
Too red a crest the maples lift.
The heart of life beats high and glad—
Can we keep wise when earth goes mad?
Do not ask me anything
Lest misfortune fall.
I am in love with Love and Spring
And not with you at all!

The Outlook — *Amelia Josephine Burr*

TYPHOON

We shall not shiver as we vainly try
To stir cold ashes once again to fire,
Nor bury a dead passion, you and I.
The wind that weds a moment sea and sky
In one exultant storm and passes by,
Was our desire.

The Bookman — *Amelia Josephine Burr*

FEEL OF BRAMBLES

She will bear him children with straight backs and
sturdy limbs,
Clear-eyed children with untroubled minds.
Mine would have been brown things, questioners—
With little hoofs, I think;
Lovers of wind and rain
And twisted brambly paths over the hills.
But he was afraid—afraid of the brown-hoofed ones;
And more afraid that sometimes,
As we grew old together,
I would slip away from him to the hills;
Where he—because of gout, or girth, or civic dignity—
Could not come after.

He need not have been troubled:
Long before that I should have lost the feel of
brambles.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse — *Hazel Rawson Cades*

THEOCRITUS

δ' ου πολέμους, δ' ου δάκρυα

Not of war, nor of tears did he build his song,
For the hills and the fields and the shepherd throng
Are caught in his delicate net of words,
With the dread wood-nymphs and the grey sea birds.
Daphnis, he sang. "Daphnis is dying now.
Ye violets bear thorns, ye cattle bow
Your heads and weep for Daphnis." And he sang
Of Polyphemus till the meadows rang.
Of Aeschines he sang; then bowed his head
And sang of Amaryllis loved, yet dead.
Then in a gladdened tone he told the tales
Of goatherds' loves in still Sicilian vales.
There the cicada with a noisy note
Chirped in the pine tree while the poet wrote.
Within his verse he caught the hum of bees
That haunt the flowers underneath those trees.

Mary Lapsley Caughey
The North American Review

TO HILDA OF HER ROSES

Enough has been said about roses
To fill thirty thick volumes:
There are as many songs about roses
As there are roses in the world
That includes Mexico....the Azores....Oregon....

It is a pity your roses
Are too late for Omar.....
It is a pity Keats has gone.....

Yet there must be something left to say
Of flowers like these!
Adventurers,
They pushed their way
Through dewy tunnels of the June night.....
Now they confer.....
A little tremulous.....
Dazzled by the yellow sea-beach of morning.....

If Herrick would tiptoe back.....
If Blake were to look this way.....
Ledwidge, even!

Contemporary Verse *Grace Hazard Conkling*

PHAEDRA REMEMBERS CRETE

Think, O my soul,
of the red sands of Crete;
think of the earth, the heat
burnt fissure like the great
backs of the temple serpents;
think of the world you knew;
as the tide crept, the land
burned with a lizard-blue
where the dark sea met the sand.

Think, O my soul—
what power has struck you blind—
is there no desert root, no forest-berry,
pine-pitch or knot of fir
known that can help the soul
caught in a force, a power,
passionless, not its own?

So I scatter, so implore
Gods of Crete, summoned before
with slighter craft;
Ah, hear my prayer:
Grant to my soul
the body that it wore,
trained to your thought,
that kept and held your power,
as the petal of black power
the opiate of the flower.

For art undreamt in Crete,
strange art and dire,
in counter-charm prevents my charm,
limits my power:
pine-cones I heap
Grant answer to my prayer.

No more, my soul—
as the black cup, sullen and dark with fire,
burns still beside it, noon's bright heat
is withered, filled with dust;
and into that noon-heat
grown drab and stale,
is sudden sound of thunder and swift rain,
till the scarlet flower is wrecked
in the slash of the white hail.

The poppy that my soul was,
formed to bind all mortals,
made to strike and gather hearts
like flame upon an altar,
fades and shrinks, a red leaf—
waste and drift of the cold rain.

PHAEDRA REBUKES HIPPOLYTA

Swift and a broken rock
clatters across the steep shelf
of the mountain-slope,

sudden and swift,
and breaks as it clatters down
into the hollow breach
of the dried water-course;
far and away
(through fire, I see it,
and smoke of the dead, withered stalks
of the wild cistus-brush)
Hippolyta, frail and wild,
galloping up the slope
between great boulders
and shelves and circles of rock.

I see it, sharp, this vision,
and each fleck on the horse's flanks
of foam, the bridle and bit,
the silver—the reins,
held fast with perfect art,
the sun, striking athwart
the silver work,
the neck, strained forward, ears alert,
and the head of the girl
flung back and her throat.

Ah, burn my fire, I ask
out of the smoke-ringed darkness
enclosing the flaming disk
of my vision—
I ask for a voice—an answer
was she chaste?

Who can say,
the broken ridge of the hills
was the line of a lover's shoulder,
his arm-turn, the path to the hills,
the sudden leap and swift thunder
of mountain-boulders his laugh.

She was mad—
as no priest, no lover's cult
could grant madness;
the wine that entered her heart
with the touch of the mountain-rocks
was white, intoxicant:
she, the lithe and remote,
was betrayed by the glint
of light on the hills,
the granite splinters of rock,
the touch of the stone
where heat melts
toward the shadow-side of the rocks.

The Dial *H. D.*

FRANCESCA

(1904—1917)

I.

Sweet of the dawn is she!
Sure of her garlands fair,
Sure of her morning brief,
With what an air
She hands Eternity
A bud, a leaf!

Far down a world wound-red
All unappalled she looks;
Where I stare barrenly,
She beauty plucks
From an untrampled bed,
Till suddenly I see.

Once more a star shall break
For me the crocus' mould;
The full year's end sleep in
A marigold;
And firs in the snow wind shake
Locks of genie and jinn.

Again over earth and me
Shall fall the coverlet
Spread by a godmother moon.
Till we forget
Night's thin, gold irony
That hid nor scar nor bone.

O, sweet with her to climb
Youth's high, unguided trail!
Along sky ledges haste,
Palms to the gale
That showers song and rhyme
As petals blow and waste!

And when in mothy light
Of trees and listening dusk,
I see her filmy go
To him, her knight,
What sap of bloom shall flow
Into dream's silvered husk!

What if, at her matron knee
In some yet covered year,
The bardling I never bore
Has sound of the hidden sea
That calls till a heart, or a sphere,
Is dumb or more?

My wand is she that smites
Open the prophet's wall;
My arrow in the sun,
Sped for no fall;
My bird along the heights
Where I shall never run.

II

She sleeps now.
Her hair, duskily nursing her cheek,
Fills me with strange music,
Like the dark flowing water of snow-fields.
Her brow, that was mere, frail porcelain,
Holding a child's few treasures,
In a pale, prophetic expanse
Over dreams that bide their vast venture.

I gaze long at her face,
Thinking at last I shall know her;
For awake she is always hiding
In ripples and pools of change.
Waves of April flow around her,
And she is my willow witch,
Weaving her web of winds
Above the blue water;
But she lifts her eyes,
Like two hours of June,
And is so nearly a rose
That to-morrow the dawn will be lapping
Gold from her open heart;
Then a laugh like Christmas day
Shuffles the seasons,
And I see chrysanthemums in a Southern garden;
White breasts in the dusk.

But now she sleeps; no stirs;
Stirs with the covetous fever
That armoured in silence creeps
By the wariest watch of lovers,

And the miracle bars of skill.
"Talk to me, Tifa, talk."
"Of what, dear Beauty?"
"Ah, that is it—beauty."
I lose a whisper, and wait.
"The song—the song we heard—"
And I know I must tell again
The story of the bird, the lowland rover
That high above our mountain orchard
Sang till a cadent coast
Rose on the unbodied air,
And all our outbound dreams put back
Where his music made a shore.

(Words, words! So soft
That they may fall on pain
And make it less! Softer than leaves
Tapping a forest sleeper; while the heart
Is like a swollen glacier crowding earth.)

Up he went singing; climbed a spiral chain
That linked his joy to heaven;
And circling, swerving as he rose, he built
An airy masonry of smoothest domes
And jetting minarets, as though he saw
From his blue height a city of the East
And in a music mirror set it fair
For his high rapture. Did we see it?
Slim, flowing alleys, streets that wound
To temples cool as shaded lakes;
Pure arches, pillars of piled notes;
Cornice and frieze and pendant flung
In rillets from one tiny heart
As prodigal as God's?

What, dearest? When you die
You'll stop and live there? Not go on
To Heaven?

No, you remember
Our city fell; came tumbling to the grass
With all its palaces and domes,
Not one note on another,
Where he, the breathless builder, fluttered,
Happy in ruin.

Yes, he panted so?
Tell you cool things?

(Words, words!
Running like water under leaves,
That they may fall on pain
And make it less!)

Cool, my heavenliest?
Then shall we walk again
Between the winter and the cliff
Where green things clung?—the little venturers,
Lustrous and shyly brave, that feed on shade
And tug at scornful bowlders
Till they are gay and gentle?
They were all there; the fronds and tresses;
Fingers and baby's palm;
The curling tufts, the plumelets proudly niched,
And little unknown leaves
That make the cold their mother;
The hearts and lances and unpious spires;
The emerald gates to houses of the gnomes.
The fairy tents that vanish at a name;
Each greener than Spring's footprint when her track
Is bright as sea-wet beryl;
Yet wearing like an outer soul
A silvered breath of winter. There
They waited, magically caught
Within a crystal smile. A place, we thought,
Where one might listen, standing long,
Thinking to hear some secret
Earth tells but once to time.

They waited, pearled in eagerness,—
Small subject wonderers of a land
Whose king was out-o'-doors
And would betimes go by.
He came—the sun!
The swift, old marvel of the sun!
For thirty midday seconds came the sun!
And you were still as every leaf he touched,
Long after his gold passing.

Yes? Your breath
Went all away into the shining?
God spoke too loud that time? Tell you—

Sleep holds her . . .
But sleep comes creeping, and takes
No sudden throne. If it be not sleep,
But the other? . . .

I sit in the folds of a dread
As in a husk that widens and swells
Till it strikes the sky.
Who is it standing, a fiend
Like a mountain darkening upward
Dropping and dropping and dropping
The ocean into a glass?
Why are the walls so near and so cold?
Wavering and greenish white?
Why are they rocking, and covered with shadows
That mightily grasp and fade?

. . . . . I know. We are under the sea.
Like a petal her face goes drifting;
A white rose petal that swirls away.
Far up is the water's clear surface;
High up, where the sky used to be;
And above it lies the good air.
We must climb . . . climb, my loveliest.
Climb . . . we cannot breathe . . . down here . . .
Under the sea.

III

If Death had taken my orange-tree,
Its gold-lit boughs, and magic birds
Singing for me,
I would not bear, though bright the dead,
This daunted head.

If Death had taken the one whose care
My fortune feeds, my roof endows,—
Leaving me bare,—
I'd meet the world from some kind door,
Gay as before.

If Death had taken my friend, the god,
Who walks among us masked as man,
Wearing the clod
To find his brother, I could live,
Love and forgive.

But she was Beauty; planets swing,
And ages toil, that one like her
May make dust sing;
And I, who held her hand, must go
Alone, and know.

Scribner's Magazine *Olive Tilford Dargan*

UNREALITY

Through the window-pane I see your face,
Its outline a little vague
In the dimness of the shadow.
But the whiteness of your skin
Is like a clean ship's sail,
With the rays of a thousand moonbeams sweeping over
Standing out in the darkness of a night.

And your eyes, I see them like two golden bowls,
them.
As I pass out into the blackness,
I wonder if I have ever really known you—
Or if you exist at all,
And are not but a twisted, fevered, silver creation of
my brain.
And the unreality of you comes over me,
Like a mist upon a lonely sea.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Mercedes de Acosta*

LACRIMAE RERUM

Rossetti walked his sorrow to a field,
Lay in the grass, and watched the wood-spurge flower.
The three-cupped wood-spurge: all that earth would
yield
Rossetti to remember of that hour.
He lay with grief, as others too have lain
Who must remember strangely other things.
Things that still keep the contours of their pain,
Whose colors cling longer than sorrow clings.

The tears of things that have not any words,
Deeper than music, stronger than the sea,
And sadder than the flight of homing birds:
Remembered things, outlasting memory.
The shapes of suffering hold, when you and I
And sorrow, and this cause for sorrow, die.

The New Republic *Babette Deutsch*

PENREB'S TOMB

"Upon these stones Time broke his teeth," you said.
We stood in Penreb's tomb, and stared upon
The hammered blocks that held the royal dead
Whose pomp still stood, altho' his breath was gone.
You said, "Slaves sweated for that narrow room."
Their scattered bones are mixed with desert sand;
But on the high walls, ruddy in the gloom,
The files of the king's servitors yet stand.

We shall not rear to death such monuments
With massive marble, nor with crimson chalk.
Nor wrap our withered limbs in cerements
More spicy than our rare ephemeral talk.
So Time, who broke his teeth upon these stones,
Gnaws at our hearts, careless of Penreb's bones.

The New Republic *Babette Deutsch*

KNOWLEDGE

Now there is no confusion in our love—
For you are there
With the big brow, the cheek of tougher grain,
The rougher greying hair;
And I am here, with a woman's throat and hands.
We are apart and different.

And there is something difference understands
That peace knows nothing of.
It is the pain in pleasure that we seek
To kill with kisses and revive
With other kisses;
For by our hurt we know we are alive.

The tides returns into the salty sea,
And sea-fingered rocks are swept and grey—
There are no secrets where the sea has crept,
But the sea
Has kept its ageless mystery.
And we,
Beaten by the returning passional tides,
Searched by the stabbing fingers,
Washed and lapped and worn by the old assault,

Knowing again
The bitterness of the receding wave,
With renewed wonder facing the old pain,
We are as close
As one wave fallen upon another wave;
We are as far
As the sky's star from the sea-shaken star.

Love is not the moon
Pulling the whole sea up to her.
And there is something darkness understands
These moons know nothing of.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Babette Deutsch*

PORTRAITS

I

Keen as the breath of frozen fjords
And poised
Like an adventurous ship with blonde sails flying—
Until you smiled with blue, lit eyes:
The sun
Splintered upon an iceberg's shining flanks.

II

You are as restless as a startled leaf
Tossed in a gale.
Yet you have peace,
When the wind drops you,
Deep as a deep well, where leaning stars
Stoop to another sky.

III

Your mind is like a road in some far country
Where soft-footed dreams,
Past mountain shrines and thundering waterfalls,
Through harsh bright cities, by abandoned tombs,
Pace without destination or regret.
Yet they are quick and subtle too,
Being tutored by your thoughts.
They love to scare the dusk with scarlet robes;
And plunge, nude maidens, into the midnight river.

IV

The wall of fog at the pier's end,
And the half-risen curtain
At the ballet,
The tuning-up of the orchestra,
And the harsh-throated brunt of revolt,
You engrossed.
An ironic observer,
Or an amateur of sensation?

V

And you, girl lover, how you spread your dreams
Like bloomy plums and pears and lucent grapes
At a fair.
You are an urchin with awed eyes and astonished laughter
To whom the antiquated show is a bomb of delight.

VI

A rock whereon the sea beats tirelessly
With futile hands
You are.
The patient stone
No tides or storms can stir.
Under your shadow
I remember death
And the remorseless stars who were
Your ancient bright companions in the sky.

VII

Are you no more
Than an embodied hunger?
Gnawing still
At the unanswered riddle.
You spurn the kingly crumbs,
But you bring bread
To those who share your spiritual fast.

The Yale Review *Babette Deutsch*

THE MOMENT OF BEAUTY

Up through the mud and gravel Beauty climbs
To light plain things of earth in sun and wet,
Till what we must have passed a thousand times
We some day see, and never can forget!
Strange how the thousand times fade out at last
And leave the one time when our eyes could see—
How Beauty with a touch rubs out the Past,
And sets a new mark up for memory.
A boulder beautiful beyond belief,
Witch-hazel blossoms bitten by the cold,
Touched with a sudden beauty, bright and brief,
Make pictures that we see till we are old;

Ay, what has once been a transfigured thing
Halts us, long after, with remembering.

Romance *Abbie Huston Evans*

THE MOUNTAINS

Wind blows upon them salt-edged from the ocean,
Rain beats upon them, blackening the stone,
Frost heaves the ledges with obscure commotion,
And the hilltops bleach like bone.

Dwindling mountains are they on a dwindling planet,
These that look so solid, these that show so fair;
Wind and rain and frost and hail set tooth to the granite,
It wastes like smoke into air.

Though they now are passing like a slow word spoken,
In the inch of time wherein man stands alone
He sees their rock-knees holding, sees their flanks unbroken,
And his heart drinks strength from the stone.

Yet they are at best but a short-lived generation,
Such as stars must laugh at as they journey forth.
Think of old Orion, that great constellation,
And the Dipper all alone in the north!

Romance *Abbie Huston Evans*

THE BOOK OF LU T'ANG CHU

In the reign of the great Emperor Lu T'ang Chu
Wise men were ordered to inscribe in a book
All the great body of wisdom that men knew.
Today I turn the pages, and as I look
I cannot see anything very new or old,
And I wonder why it was worth the trouble, then,
Of days and nights and a thousand labors untold
Which the volume must have exacted from those wise men.
But still we write—and the Emperor now is blown
As grey dust over the limitless Asian plains.
Still we inscribe all that is humanly known,
Although no ruler honors us for our pains—
Recording a thousand wisdoms, all our own,
To celebrate our good and glorious reigns.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Arthur Davison Ficke*

PRELUDE

He speaks
Open your eyes.
I have never seen them.

She answers
I am afraid to open my eyes. . . .
Be content to look upon my hands.

He speaks
Your hands are moist and gentle,
Your hands are long and slow
And smooth as apples.
Your hands are restful and far distant
As nude hills beyond hot plains.
Your hands are tender as young clover leaves.

I know the colour of your eyes.
They are grey of unripe peaches,
And silent green of peridot
Made dumb with stars.
Open your eyes.
I have never seen them.

She answers

I am afraid to open my eyes. . . .
Be content to look upon my throat.

He speaks

Your throat is white as an Egyptian moth
And curves like a temple bell.
Your throat glistens like oak leaves
And is cool as September wind,
Cooler than fresh earth.
I know the colour of your eyes.
They are blue as larkspur
And shimmer more heedlessly
Than snow on blossoming orchards.
Open your eyes.
I have never seen them.

She answers

I am afraid to open my eyes.

He speaks

Are they as black as trees at night?
Are there wings of sun within them,
Fluttering at the candle of your thoughts?
Are they pale brown as tassels of summer corn?
Are they gold as Venetian sails?
Open your eyes.

She answers

I am afraid to open my eyes.
With them closed
I see forests pillared like the streets
Of ancient Antioch.
I see mountains
Transparent in the evening sun
As the yellow sarong of an Indian princess.

I know secrets so delicate,
They would shatter beneath gossamer.
There is forgotten fragrance in my nostrils.
Weighty and vivid music sags above me.
Can you hear it?
I feel distances without horizon,
And depths so great
That they are heights.

He speaks

Open your eyes.

She answers

Would life still be
Resounding days of singing columns,
Tall nights of wistful towers?
And would the sweet, immeasurable earth
Chant beneath my feet?
Could I still sleep beside the moon
And wake to silence coming like a flock of swans
Upon my consciousness?

If I should . . . open my eyes?

The Measure *Hildegarde Flanner*

COMMUNION

I have spoken with the dead;
From the silence of my bed
I have heard them in the night.
Their voices are as white
As altar candles. Their voices are as gold as wheat,
And clustered in the dark their words are sweet
As ripened fruit. Their voices are the color of dim
rain
Over grass where spring has lain.
Their speaking is an orchard of delight.
I have heard them in the night;
Their lips bloomed into heavy song
That hung like bells above me. You are wrong
Who say the dead lie still:
I heard them sing until
The cup of silence fell in two and lay
Broken by beauty of what dead men say.

There is no loveliness I cannot see.
There is no wall too stern for me.
There is no door that can withstand
The lifted symbol of my hand.

I know an ancient shibboleth:
I pass, for I have talked with Death!

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Hildegarde Flanner*

ALLEGIANCE

I have not forgotten yet
Skin that chokes like mignonette,
I who drank myself to death
With the apples of your breath,
I who blasphemously went
Into your beauty's tenement,
I who eagerly confessed
Upon the altar of your breast.

I who falter in the snare
Of your canary-colored hair,
Sacredly could not forget
Skin that chokes like mignonette.

The Bookman — *Hildegarde Flanner*

THE SILENCE

There is a silence which I carry about with me always—
A silence perpetual, for it is self-created;
A silence of heat, of water, of unchecked fruitfulness,
Through which each year the heavy harvests bloom, and burst, and fall.

Deep, matted green silence of my South,
Often, within the push and the scorn of great cities,
I have seen that mile-wide waste of water swaying out to you,
And on its current glimmering I am going to the sea.

There is a silence I have achieved—I have walked
beyond its threshold.
I know it is without horizons, boundless, fathomless,
perfect.
And some day maybe, far away,
I shall curl up in it at last and sleep an endless sleep.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *John Gould Fletcher*

THE STEVEDORES

Frieze of warm bronze that glides with cat-like move-
ments
Over the gang-plank poised and yet awaiting,
The sinewy thudding rhythms of forty shuffling feet
Falling like muffled drum-beats on the stillness:

Oh, roll the cotton down—
Roll, roll, the cotton down!
From the further side of Jordan,
Oh, roll the cotton down!

And the river waits,
The river listens,
Chuckling with little banjo-notes that break with a
plop on the stillness.
And by the low dark shed that holds the heavy
freights,
Two lonely cypress trees stand up and point with
stiffened fingers
Far southward where a single chimney stands aloof
in the sky.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *John Gould Fletcher*

PURCHASE

[*Certain letters written by Lorenzo de' Medici are sold at auction.*]

They shall come in and chat, their purses hid,
The men who hold rare things and gently smile,
They shall disturb frail, musty sheets and bid
A fortune for this letter or gray file
Of parchment, nobly written by the hand
That loved to gleam in gems and curious rings,
Point out a man for death—give castles, land,
Or rest on ermined shoulders of tall kings
And through the room, as from an unsealed urn,
Shadows will drift, faint shapes of Florence—dead,
Born of these records men shall lift and turn,
Knowing as he, who gave the artists bread
For white madonnas, saints, God's cloudy throne,
A man may buy what he can never own!

Harper's Magazine *Hortense Flexner*

A HILLSIDE THAW

To think to know the country and not know
The hillside on the day the sun lets go
Ten million silver lizards out of snow.
As often as I've seen it done before
I can't pretend to tell the way it's done.
It looks as if some magic of the sun
Lifted the rug that bred them on the floor
And the light breaking on them made them run.
But if I thought to stop the wet stampede,
And caught one silver lizard by the tail,
And put my foot on one without avail,
And threw myself wet-elbowed and wet-kneed

In front of twenty others' wriggling speed,—
In the confusion of them all aglitter
And birds that joined in the excited fun
By doubling and redoubling song and twitter,
I have no doubt I'd end by holding none.
It takes the moon for this. The sun's a wizard
By all I tell; but so's the moon a witch.
From the high west she makes a gentle cast
And suddenly without a jerk or twitch
She has her spell on every single lizard.
I fancied when I looked at eight o'clock
The swarm still ran and scuttled just as fast.
The moon was waiting for her chill effect.
I looked at ten: the swarm was turned to rock
In every life-like posture of the swarm,
Transfixed on mountain slopes almost erect.
Across each other and side by side they lay.
The spell that so could hold them as they were
Was wrought through trees without a breath of storm
To make a leaf, if there had been one, stir.
It was the moon's. She held them until one day,
One lizard at the end of every ray.
The thought of my attempting such a stay!

The New Republic *Robert Frost*

MISGIVING

All crying, "We will go with you, O Wind,"
The foliage follow him, leaf and stem,
But a sleep oppresses them as they go,
And they end by bidding him stay with them.

Since ever they flung abroad in spring,
The leaves have promised themselves this flight,
Who now would fain seek sheltering wall,
Or thicket, or hollow place for the night.

And now they answer the summoning blast
  With an ever vaguer and vaguer stir,
Or, at utmost, a little reluctant whirl
  That drops them no further than where they were.

I only hope that when I am free,
  As they are free, to go in quest
Of the knowledge beyond the bounds of life,
  It may not seem better to *me* to rest.

The Yale Review — *Robert Frost*

THE NEED OF BEING VERSED IN COUNTRY THINGS

The house had gone to bring again
  To the midnight sky a sunset glow.
Now the chimney was all of the house that stood,
  Like a pistil after the petals go.

The barn opposed across the way,
  That would have joined the house in flame
Had it been the will of the wind, was left
  To bear forsaken the place's name.

No more it opened with all one end
  For teams that came by the stony road
To drum on the floor with scurrying hoofs
  And brush the mow with the summer load.

The birds that came to it through the air
  At broken windows flew out and in,
Their murmur more like the sigh we sigh
  From too much dwelling on what has been

Yet for them the lilac renewed its leaf,
And the aged elm, though touched with fire;
And the dry pump flung up an awkward arm;
And the fence post carried a strand of wire.

For them there was really nothing sad.
But though they rejoiced in the nest they kept,
One had to be versed in country things
Not to believe the phœbes wept.

Harper's Magazine *Robert Frost*

A STAR IN A STONE-BOAT

Never tell me that not one star of all
That slip from heaven at night and softly fall
Has been picked up with stones to build a wall.

Some laborer found one faded and stone cold,
And saving that its weight suggested gold,
And tugged it from his first too certain hold,

He noticed nothing in it to remark.
He was not used to handling stars thrown dark
And lifeless from an interrupted arc.

He did not recognize in that smooth coal
The one thing palpable besides the soul
To penetrate the air in which we roll.

He did not see how like a flying thing
It brooded ant-eggs, and had one large wing,
One not so large for flying in a ring,

And a long Bird of Paradise's tail,
(Though these when not in use to fly and trail
It drew back in its body like a snail);

Nor know that he might move it from the spot—
The harm was done: from having been star shot
The very nature of the soil was hot

And burning to yield flowers instead of grain,
Flowers fanned and not put out by all the rain
Poured on them by his prayers prayed in vain.

He moved it roughly with an iron bar,
He loaded an old stone-boat with the star
And not, as you might think, a flying car,

Such as even poets would admit perforce
More practical than Pegasus the horse
If it could put a star back in its course.

He dragged it though the ploughed ground at a pace
But faintly reminiscent of the race
Of jostling rock in interstellar space.

It went for building-stone, and I as though
Commanded in a dream forever go
To right the wrong that this should have been so.

Yet ask where else it could have gone as well,
I do not know—I cannot stop to tell:
He might have left it lying where it fell.

From following walls I never lift my eye
Except at night to places in the sky
Where showers of charted meteors let fly.

Some may know what they seek in school and church,
And why they seek it there; for what I search
I must go measuring stone walls, perch on perch;

Sure that though not a star of death and birth,
So not to be compared, perhaps, in worth
To such resorts of life as Mars and Earth,—

Though not, I say, a star of death and sin,
It yet has poles, and only needs a spin
To show its worldly nature and begin

To chafe and shuffle in my calloused palm
And run off in strange tangents with my arm
As fish do with the line in first alarm.

Such as it is, it promises the prize
Of the one world complete in any size
That I am like to compass, fool or wise.

The Yale Review *Robert Frost*

NORAH EN DE ARK

I wisht dat I wuz Norah a-sailin' in de Ark,
A-sailin', sailin', sailin' fur away.
He heerd his Massa callin' him, a-callin' thoo the dark,
A-callin', callin', callin' all de day.
Norah he wuz righeous, en de Lawd He say, sezee,
"Go mek yerse'f a dwellin'-place en ride upon de sea."
En Norah say, perlitely, "You done right ter pick
on me,"
En he hammer, hammer, hammer w'ile he pray.

Gawd He walk' wid Norah,
En Norah walk' wid Gawd.
In de coolness ob de ev'nin' time
Norah walk' wid Gawd.

De Lawd he says ter Norah, "Mek dat Ark o'goopher
wood,
En hammer, hammer, hammer wid yer might,
En black it up wid pitch 'n' tar, en waterproof it good,
En hammer, hammer, hammer ha'd en tight.
Go mek it fifty cupids wide en t'irty cupids high,
En mek it monst'us long er e'se I'll know de reason
w'y;

En build it up t'ree stories, wid a winder fer ter spy,
En hammer, hammer, hammer day an' night."
Gawd He walk' wid Norah, etc.

De Lawd he say ter Norah, "Set yer fambly all ter work
Ter hammer, hammer, hammer wid deir might.
Don' let yer sons en wimmen en de pickaninnies shirk;
Dey mus' hammer, hammer, hammer ha'd en tight."
En Norah say, "I years Y'u, en we'll wo'k lak de Ole Nick.
I knows it ain't no picnic fer ter build a boat so quick,
But ef we-alls des humps ourse'fs we's boun' ter do de trick,
Ef we hammer, hammer, hammer day en night."
Gawd He walk' wid Norah, etc.

Now, Norah he was gittin' on, but full o' soopleness,
En hammer, hammer, hammer wid 'is might.
His years wuz ha'f a t'ousan', wid a hunderd, mo'er less,
But he hammer, hammer, hammer ha'd en tight.
Ham he wuz a hummer en a hammerer t' boot.
He foun' de fines' goopher trees en pull 'em by de root;
En Shem he wuz 'is pappy's pet en w'istle on de flute
W'ile dey hammer, hammer, hammer day en night.
Gawd He walk' wid Norah, etc.

Japet wuz de younges', des a hunderd year er so,
But he hammer, hammer, hammer wid 'is might.
He run 'is pappy's errants en he w'ittle on de do',
En hammer, hammer, hammer ha'd en tight.
En w'en de Ark wuz finish' Norah mek de 'tation lis'
En 'vited all de beasteses, en not a one he miss',
En he ax' de birds en fishes kaze de Lawd He done insis',
W'ile he hammer, hammer, hammer day en night.
Gawd He walk' wid Norah, etc.

"Now, how does you sergashuate?" sez Norah ter a w'ale.
"Des hurry, hurry, hurry 'fo' hit's dark.
Be sho' you bring de missus, en don' flop eroun' yer tail,
Ner squabble, squabble, squabble wid de shark."
He axes Mistah Skeetur would he please ter enter in.
Mis' Norah she git mad ez hops en say it wuz a sin,
W'ich mek de Skeetur huffy en he stung 'er on de chin,
En hammer, hammer, hammer thoo de Ark.
Gawd He walk' wid Norah, etc.

Dey all went in by twoses, en at las' de Ark wuz full,
En wot-a, wot-a, wot-a load wuz dey!
Shem bolted fas' de winder, en den give de bell a pull,
En dey floated, floated, floated up de bay.
De Lawd He say ter Norah, "Wid des all Mah might en main,
For fo'ty days en fo'ty nights I's gwinter sen' a rain,
En ef you-alls behaves yerse'fs, ner takes Mah name in vain,
You'll go sailin', sailin', sailin' fur away."
Gawd He walk' wid Norah, etc.

En w'en de ride wuz did en done, dey all goes troo de do'
Ez happy, happy, happy ez a lark,
En falls down on deir kneeses fer ter t'ank de Lawd fer sho'
Dey wuz 'livered, 'livered, 'livered f'om de dark.
De Lawd He flung a rainbow 'crost de elements en sky,
En He say ter Mistah Norah, "You is monst'us peart en spry,
En I'll neber disremembers you's de apple ob Mah eye,
Fer you hammer, hammer, hammer on de Ark."
Gawd He walk' wid Norah, etc.

W'Y DE BLACK FOLKS AM SO GOOD

Dere's some w'at says dat de Lawd wuz out
W'en nigger folks wuz made.
De debil he come roun' at dusk
A-shamblin' thoo de shade.
He hed a bucket full o' tar
He'd toted f'om below,
En' he melt it wid a red-hot star
'Til he hed it bile' des so.
He went to wo'k en' made a man
De spittin' twin o' paw,
Den sot a 'ooman long beside
Prezackly lak yer maw.
He lef' 'em des outside de gate,
En w'en de Lawd come home
He seed 'em, peart an' biggetty,
A-peerin' thoo de gloam.
Sezee, "Dat debil's at 'is tricks;
I'll stir up one myse'f."
So He ups en' blows on bofe on 'em
'Til he chocked 'em full o' bref.
"Now scoot!" sezee, en' off dey scamps
A-chasin' Brudder Nick,
Who, w'en he seed 'em at 'is heels,
Begun ter holler quick:
"Oh, mercy, Lawd, dear Mistah Lawd!
I is de fooly one.
I mek You sech a fine supprise
En' dis am w'at You done!
Oh, lawsy massy! call 'em off!
Don' sic 'em at mah tail!"
Den hippety-fetchity on he humps
En' leab a cinder trail.
De Lawd He call dem niggers back,
Den laff Hisse'f plum sick.
"Lib on," sezee, "en' multerply,
En' keep on skeerin' Nick."
En' dat's de w'y ob ev'yt'ing,

Fer de debil ter dis day,
W'eneber he sees nigger folks,
Goes lopin' t'other way.

The Outlook — *Louise Ayres Garnett*

SALEM, CONDITA 1626

So you visited Salem?
And you saw the Witch House
And Gallows Hill?
And the House of Seven Gables,
And Hawthorne's birthplace?
But you did not see Salem.
How could you?
It has been shut up in my heart for forty years.
I think I was the last who saw it.

How could you see Salem?
You never lived with maiden aunts
Who remembered better days
And nothing else.
You never went to school
Next a graveyard
To a grim old dame who
Denounced youth and pleasure
With savage Scripture readings.

You never peeped, with splendid awe,
Beneath closed blinds
To see wraiths of women
Nursing life-long grudges or heart pangs
Shut in from the light of day.

You never ran away
To sit for hours with gray men
Who talked of Hong-Kong and Sumatra
Of Singapore and Java
As one talks of the corner grocery
Or the cobbler next street.
You never had idle ships and wharves
And empty granite warehouses
For playgrounds
Nor roamed through great
Three-story houses with infinite rooms,
All full of dust of the departed
Where even the mice were venerable.

All this I did, and
I can see Salem.
I would like to show it to you,
But if I touch it,
It crumbles.

The Nation *H. C. Gauss*

PRAYER

O thou elemental
Rain, sun, and body of the quick warm earth:
Hear these words from the cells of thy blood,
Multitudinous, various!

Let the waters at the dim roots of the grass be
sweet,
And the milk be abundant in the breasts of time—
Yet a little while, till the pearl-gray banners of
smoke
Be dissolved, and the flowing of rivulets be but a
distant murmur
In the shout and the far white splendor of thy coming.

Let thy kindness be as a wide white blanket covering
all
The brave inglorious futile race of men
Who lift tired eyes ever to sad stars
More desolate
Than the wind-harrowed wastes of ocean,
Whence comes no answer.
And after our futile striving, give us
Peace.

Clifford Franklin Gessler

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse

NEVERTHELESS

Inasmuch as I love you
And shall know no peace more unless I am near you,
Though you are a flame of will
Proud and variable as you are beautiful and dear—
Nevertheless I will go your way,
Since you will not go mine.

Therefore, although the cool roads of my village
Are more pleasant to me than the pavements of your
city;
Although its dim streets are more kindly than your
glaring arcs;
Though the unhurried voices of my townspeople
Are more friendly music in my ears than the scream-
ings
And glib chatter of your city-dwellers:
Nevertheless I will go down with you into the city
And bruise my heart upon its bricks;
Become brother to its shrieking "elevated"
And learn to hurry away my days in this brief world
Among the grimy roofs that soil the clean young
sunshine;

Thinking only at long whiles, in summer dusks,
Of hushed paths where hurrying feet have never trodden,
Of cool lanes white in the splendor of the rising moon.

Clifford Franklin Gessler
Poetry, A Magazine of Verse

INTERPRETED

Now I know why ivy
Climbs against the wall
Striving to be graceful,
Greener and more tall.

Now I see why swallows
Sweep across the sky
In their swift excitement,
Shrilling as they fly.

Now I hear all music says;
The stream's low murmuring.
Now I know why gardens grow
And birds forever sing.

All of earth and heaven,
God's grandeur, with the rest,
I glimpse in flashing worship
While I lie against your breast.

The Boston Transcript *Caroline Giltinan*

AFTER WHISTLER

This mezzo-tint of mist and smoke blue air,
These gray blue waters, gray black cherry trees
Are Whistler's manner to the brushtip. . . these
And shore-lamps lit against the nearing night,
That lie in little broken lanes of light.

He would have washed these wistful colors in
With brooding hand and spirit edged and keen—
His vision and the subtle hour akin—
Seeing beyond the symbol the unseen,
The overtones of tint, the underglow
Which lends that nameless gleam of lustre-ware
To slow-rippled river there.

Blue-silver lights! He would have loved them so!
And that black bridge, long-spanned and low,
With the frail mist fringing the farther end.
What art he had for bridges—skill to blend
Their arches into his backgrounds of blue air.

Swiftly he would have caught this nocturne mood,
This mood of mist and sky,
And held it in few strokes and fewer tones,
Set there
Below the blurred-in trees his *Butterfly*
And called it "Silver and Blue." . . .
Bridge-Builder of dreams, I dedicate
This river dusk to you.

The Measure — *Agnes Kendrick Gray*

THE WORKER

I've towered above the hilt of my spade,
Knowing with what muscle-gnawing action,
I mold the earth into usable shape;
And there arises within me, what is more pain to
stay . . .
But the desert is answerless.

The desert is blue and yellow and answerless.

I've risen above the hairy smell of me;
I've held down my rigored fists,
I've stood high over shoulders
To the mind of me . . .
But the mind's unreponsive as lead,
And the lips are sealed as with lead.

As a leaden bell with a song it must sing.

I've faced men with God in their faces,
I've shown them the crucifixion in mine;
From a breast not yet washed of oil and mud of
labor
I've loosed my blood on foreign lands for men;
And I've cried aloud,
But it was not the cry of battle pain.
Now the people wave flags in drunken triumph,
And smother my only song in street dust and confetti.

With my spade I've changed the desert,
With the fire of me I've melted the lead:
But men

Even Christ could not make you listen.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *David Greenhood*

SLUMBER SONG

When blue dust thickens in the air
  And all the strands of wind
Are braided like unruly hair,
  After the sun goes blind,

And I have signed on slumber ships,
  Then am I skipper of the skies,
Strange lyrics written on my lips,
  Strange sonnets in my eyes.

Then am I singing, it would seem,
  To fairy fiddle and bassoon
Till daylight has dissolved the dream
  As morning does the moon.

Oh, sweet and sad and quaintly dear
  Are secrets that I never tell,
Which stay to haunt my waking ear,
  Each like a tiny bell!

And when the blue dust is no more,
  And when my loved ones, kind and gay,
Arise and listen at my door
  They always steal away,

And leave me to my raptured hours,
  Who smile so strangely as I rest,
Pale with the drug of poppy flowers
  Still heavy on my breast.

If death be sleep, I wonder why
  They gave it not the softer name—
Ah, me, but it were dear to die
  If dying were the same!

The Smart Set *Amanda Benjamin Hall*

SANDS

My days are like sands; colorless,
Each matched to each, unerringly
They drift. The salt bleach of a sea
Has washed them clean and lustreless;
The teeth of rock on ragged strands
Have ground them to an even gray,
And one wind blows them a one way.

But O the slow making of sands.

All is here; forgotten things
Mix with the unforgettable,
Granite blends with tinted shell,
And nothing so stable that it clings
To its stability. Had there
Been more of marble, more of gold,
The sands would hide in their grim hold
Nothing more wise, nothing more fair.

But O the slow making of sands.

Grain on grain of even gray,
Slowly they drift in the one way,
Covering the wreck that stands
Against my beach of life. . . . one mast
Cuts at the sky, the hull is fast
In sand—the slow-made sands that pull
With the wind . . . covering . . .
And leaving every broken thing
Hushed and coldly beautiful.

The Measure — *Hazel Hall*

SPRING FROM A WINDOW

Blossom-Time

So long as there is April
My heart is high,
Lifting up its white dreams
To the sky.

As trees hold up their blossoms
In a blowing cloud,
My hands are reaching,
My hands are proud.

All the crumbled splendors
Of autumn, and the cries
Of winds that I remember
Cannot make me wise.

Like the trees of April
Fearless and fair—
My heart swings its censers
Through the golden air.

In April

Now I am Life's victim—
Cruel victor is he
Who lashes me with color
Until I ache to see.

Who chokes me with fragrance
Of green things in the rain—
Like a hand around my throat
So sudden is the pain.

Life, I am at your mercy;
And though till I am dead
You torture me with April
I will not bow my head!

When There is April

Who would fear death when there is April?—
Like a flame, like a song—
To heal all who have lived with yearning
Year-through, life-long.

When there is April with fulfilment
For longing and for pain,
For every reaching hand that beauty
Has lured in vain.

Who would shrink from the earth when April
With slim rain hands shall reach
Through the doors of dark, and call them
Who love her speech.

Foreboding

How shall I keep April
When my songs are done—
How can I be silent
And still feel the sun?

I, who dreaded silence,
I, who April-long
Kept my heart from breaking
With the cry of song.

How can I hold sunlight
In my hands, like gold,
And bear the pain of silence
When my songs are old?

The Yale Review — *Hazel Hall*

SUNLIGHT THROUGH A WINDOW

Beauty streamed into my hand
In sunlight through a pane of glass;
Now at last I understand
Why suns must pass.

I have held a shadow—cool
Reflection of a burning gold,
And it has been more beautiful
Than hands should hold.

To that delicate tracery
Of light, a force my lips must name
In whispers of uncertainty,
Has answered through me in a flame.

Beauty is a core of fire
To reaching hands; even its far
Passing leaves a hurt desire
Like a scar.

TO A DOOR

Door, you stand in your darkened frame
Mindful of your wooden might,
Flaunting relentlessly your claim
As guardian of sound and light.

Yet for all your vigil, Door,
Shadows that slip on panting feet
Over your threshold tinge the floor
With what was sunlight on the street.

And sounds fluttering in to die—
(Door, you thought I should not know!)
Were started by an echo's cry
That was a voice not long ago.

STAIRWAYS

Why do I think of stairways
With a rush of hurt surprise?—
Wistful as forgotten love
In remembered eyes,
And fitful as the flutter
Of little draughts of air
That linger on a stairway
As though they loved it there.

New and shining stairways,
Stairways worn and old—
Where rooms are prison places
And corridors are cold—
You intrigue with fancy,
You challenge with a lore
Elusive as a moon's light
Shadowing a floor.

You speak to me not only
With the lure of storied art—
For wonder of old footsteps
Lies lightly on my heart;
More than the reminiscence
Of yesterday's renown—
Laughter that might have floated up,
Echoes that should drift down!

THE GRAY VEIL

Life flings weariness over me
Like a thick gray veil; I see
Through its mesh where suns are cold,
Nights are ancient and dawns are old.

Now at last with glamour gone
I can see the naked dawn;
Gauge the gilded depths of noon,
Coolly question star and moon.

And where fired sunsets pale
I, who wear life's gray veil,
Shall not marvel, shall not care.
No light of earth's however fair,
Robbed of the sting of its surprise,
Can delude my sober eyes.

LONELINESS

Sometimes when I am long alone
I wonder what is loneliness—
This silence like a deep bell's tone—
These moments, motionless?

This hush above the nervous street?—
Removed as is the tree that stands,
Hill-high, with burrowing root-feet
And boughs like reaching hands.

As in my blood I feel life press,
Like sap into the frailest bough,
I think if such is loneliness
Then I am lonely now.

Contemporary Verse — *Hazel Hall*

REPETITIONS

I plunge at the rearing hours—
Life is a steed of pride,
Who so high above me towers
I cannot mount and ride.

TWO SEWING

The wind is sewing with needles of rain;
With shining needles of rain
It stitches into the thin
Cloth of earth—in,
In, in, in.
(Oh, the wind has often sewed with me!—
One, two, three.)

Spring must have fine things
To wear, like other springs.
Of silken green the grass must be
Embroidered. (One and two and three.)
Then every crocus must be made
So subtly as to seem afraid
Of lifting color from the ground.
And after crocuses the round
Heads of tulips, and all the fair
Intricate garb that Spring will wear
The wind must sew with needles of rain,
With shining needles of rain
Stitching into the thin
Cloth of earth—in,
In, in, in—
For all the springs of futurity.
(One, two, three.)

INSTRUCTION

My hands that guide a needle
In their turn are led
Relentlessly and deftly,
As a needle leads a thread.

Other hands are teaching
My needle; when I sew
I feel the cool, thin fingers
Of hands I do not know.

They urge my needle onward,
They smooth my seams, until
The worry of my stitches
Smothers in their skill.

All the tired women,
Who sewed their lives away,
Speak in my deft fingers
As I sew today.

THREE SONGS FOR SEWING

I

A fibre of rain on a window-pane
Talked to a stitching thread:
In the heaviest weather I hold together
The weight of a cloud!

To the fibre of rain on a window-pane
The talkative stitches said:
I hold together with the weight of a feather
The heaviest shroud!

II

My needle says: Don't be young,
  Holding visions in your eyes,
Tasting laughter on your tongue!—
  Be very old and very wise,
And sew a good seam up and down
In white cloth, red cloth, blue and brown.

My needle says: What is youth
  But eyes drunken with the sun,
Seeing farther than the truth;
  Lips that call, hands that shun
The many seams they have to do
In white cloth, red cloth, brown and blue!

III

One by one, one by one,
Stitches of the hours run
  Through the fine seams of the day;
Till like a garment it is done
  And laid away.

One by one the days go by,
And suns climb up and down the sky;
  One by one their seams are run—
As Time's untiring fingers ply
  And life is done.

COWARDICE

Discomfort sweeps my quiet, as a wind
Leaps at trees and leaves them cold and thinned.
Not that I fear again the mastery
Of winds, for holding my indifference dear
I do not feel illusions stripped from me.
And yet this is a fear—

A fear of old discarded fears, of days
That cried out at irrevocable ways.
I cower for my own old cowardice—
For hours that beat upon the wind's broad breast
With hands as impotent as leaves are: this
Robs my new hour of rest.

I thought my pride had covered long ago
All the old scars, like broken twigs in snow;
I thought to luxuriate in rich decay,
As some far-seeing tree upon a hill;
But, startled into shame for an old day,
I find that I am but a coward still.

FLASH

I am less of myself and more of the sun;
The beat of life is wearing me
To an incomplete oblivion,
Yet not to the certain dignity
Of death. (They cannot even die
Who have not lived.)
The hungry jaws
Of space snap at my unlearned eye,
And time tears in my flesh like claws.

If I am not life's, if I am not death's,
Out of chaos I must re-reap
The burden of untasted breaths.
(Who has not waked may not yet sleep.)

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Hazel Hall*

BORASAN

In the desert near Khotan
Lie the bones of Borasan.
Once its roofs were red and blue
Where the pear and poplar grew;
Once where river barges rode
Rainbow stuffs of barter glowed,—
Peacock plumes and scarlet wool,
Silver fish from Kara-Kul,
Apricots and carven jades,
Mills for prayer, beaten blades.
Mounded now are sands above
Buried barter, buried love,
Only winds that burrow deep
Tumble sunward from their sleep
Rings engreened upon the bone,
Buddhas smiling in blue stone,
Coins, combs, toys, the dust of vases,
Walls the restless sand effaces.

Men with sword and torch and shout
Did not blot that city out.
Men were sand to pass and pass,
Gleam and shadow, through her glass.

Buddha begging with a bowl
Spread the white peace of his soul.

Eyes beneath a shading hand,
Gazing eastward over sand,
Alexander, desert-burned,
Dreamed, and looked his fill, and turned.

Westward riding Ghengis Khan
Stopped to ask of Borasan
Seven asses heaped with pearls,
Meat and millet, fifty girls.
These he got, and did not stay. . . .

Marco Polo went this way . . .

Over tundras, God-enticed,
Friars crept to preach their Christ. . . .

Still the camels through the gates
Coughed beneath their swaying freights;
Brown-legged boatmen from the stream
Made the palace parrots scream,
Till the peach and melon land
Shrank between the seas of sand,
Till the sand was drifted, drifted,
Slowly through the poplars sifted,
Reached at last the river's edge,
Slowly builded bar and ledge,
Till the crystal ribbon dried
To a crystal thread, and died,
And the green of melon plots
And the gold of apricots
Sank like sunlight into sand—
Till the wind upheaved the land,
And the earth, that mothered man,
Whelmed him there in Borasan.

Northward still the river runs
Unsubdued by sand or suns,
Northward still the poplars press
On its living loveliness.
Here the reeds are tall in spring,
Wild geese mate and finches sing,
Here the shepherds drive their sheep,—
Build themselves for shade and sleep
Huts of woven reeds, and make
Out of maize a simple cake.
How to bake and herd and shear,—
That is all of knowledge here.
Once perhaps their fathers knew
Pointed roofs of red and blue,

Once with millstones crushed their maize,
Baked them tiles to pave their ways,
Ate from silver, drank from glass—
All is lost in sand, alas!

Is it so? Did thousands die
When the *buran* lifted high
Desert dunes to storm their doors,
Slaying through the streets and floors?
Crept a few at length to light
Through those days the sand made night,
Wild with wind, and beasts that ran
Screaming out of Borasan?
Did they crawl they knew not where,
Wear away from what they were,
Rudely learn to live again,
Rived from trade and art and men?
All they gathered, all they knew,
Did it die as raindrops do,
Leaving only maize and sheep,
Toil and huts of reed and sleep?
Back again where life began
Grope thy people, Borasan?

The Measure — *Frank Ernest Hill*

UPPER AIR

High, pale, imperial places of slow cloud
And windless wells of sun-swept silence . . . Sense
Of some aware, half scornful permanence
Past which we flow like water that is loud
A moment 'gainst the granite. Nothing here
Beats to the quick deed that we left below,
That was a flame; this is the soul of snow
Immortalized in moveless atmosphere.

Yet we shall brood upon this haunt of wings
When love, like perfume washed away in rain,
Dies in the years. Still we shall turn again,
Seeking the clouds as we have sought the sea,
Asking the peace of these immortal things
That will not mix with our mortality.

The New Republic *Frank Ernest Hill*

TO ROBINSON CRUSOE

So to be loved and listened to and touched
By crowds of moist-fingered little folks
With eyes of wonder—who would save his life
And hug an English hearth for seventy years,
When to be shipwrecked is to live forever?
You thought you were dead to the world, but you were wrong,
Old Crusoe, when you bobbed up on that isle
Of curious creatures waiting to be tamed,
And lonely footprints waiting for a friend.
Dreaming of cobbled streets you fought your way
Alone, and built your little brave stockade;
Sick for a roof in England, long dumb hours
You smoked your pipe out by your unshared fire;
You thought that all was over, never guessed
You were piling years up, looking to the days
When little children would not let you die!

Smith's Magazine *Marie Louise Hersey*

GAMESTERS ALL

The river boat had loitered down its way,
The ropes were coiled, and business for the day
Was done. The cruel noon closed slowly down
And cupped the streaming town.
Stray voices called across the blinding heat,
Then drifted off to shadowy retreat
Among the sheds. The waters of the bay
Sucked away
In tepid swirls
As listless as the day.
Silence closed about me like a wall
Final and obstinate as death.
Until I longed to break it with a call,
Or barter life for one deep, windy breath.

A mellow laugh came rippling
Across the stagnant air
Lifting it into little waves of life.
Then, true and clear,
I caught
A snatch of harmony;
Sure, lilting tenor and a drowsing bass,
Elusive chords that weave and interlace,
And poignant little minors broken short
Like robins calling June.
And then the tune:

"Oh, nobody knows when de Lord am goin' ter call,
Roll dem bones.
It may be in de Summer time an may be in de Fall,
Roll dem bones.
But yer got ter leabe yer baby an yer home an all.
So, roll dem bones
Oh, my brudder,
Oh, my brudder,
Oh, my brudder,
Roll dem bones."

There they squatted,
Gambling away
Their meagre pay,
Fatalists all.
I heard the muted fall
Of dice, then the assured
Retrieving sweep of hand on roughened board.

I thought it good to see
Four lives so free
From care; so indolently sure of each tomorrow,
And hearts attuned to sing away a sorrow.

Then, like a shot,
Out of the hot,
Still air, I heard a call.
"Throw up your hands,
I've got you all.
It's thirty days for gambling.
Come Tony, Paul.
Now Joe don't be a fool.
I've got you cool."

I saw his eyes and knew he'd never go;
Not Joe,
The strongest hand in River Bow.
Springing from where he sat, straight, cleanly made,
He soared, a leaping shadow, from the shade
With fifty feet to go.
It was the stiffest hand he ever played.
To win the corner meant
Deep, sweet content
Among his laughing kind.
To lose; to suffer blind,
Degrading slavery upon "The gang."
And killing suns, and fever ridden nights
Behind relentless bars
Of prison cars.

He hung a breathless second in the sun,
The staring road before him; then like one
Who stakes his all, and has a gamester's heart,
His laughter flashed.
He lunged.
I gave a start.
God, what a man!
The massive shoulders hunched, and, as he ran,
With head held low, and splendid length of limb,
I almost felt the beat
Of passionate life that surged in him
And winged his spurning feet.

And then my eyes went dim:
The marshal's gun was out.
I saw the grim,
Short barrel, and his face
Aflame with the excitement of the chase.
He was an honest sportsman, as they go;
He never shot a doe,
Or spotted fawn,
Or partridge on the ground.
And as for Joe—
He'd wait until he had a yard to go,
Then, if he missed, he'd laugh and call it square.
My gaze lept to the corner, waited there.
And now an arm would reach it, I saw hope flare
Across the runner's face.

Then, like a pang
In my own heart,
The pistol rang.

The form I watched soared forward,
Swung the curve. "By God, you've missed."
The marshal shook his head.
No, there he lay, face downward in the road.
"I reckon he was dead
Before he hit the ground,"

The marshal said.
"Just once at fifty feet;
A moving target too.
That's just about as good
As any man could do.
A little tough;
But since he ran
I call it fair enough."

He mopped his head and started down the road.
The silence eddied around him, turned and flowed
Softly back, and pressed against the ears,
Until unnumbered flies set it to droning,
And, down the heat, I heard a woman moaning.

Contemporary Verse *DuBose Heyward*

FRANCISCO PIZARRO

"Desperate, my men, are our straits.
Natives with vemon-pointed darts harass us.
Hunger draws taut our fevered skins.
Disaster, ever-renewed, makes us its mock.
Death bends and breaks our serried ranks.
All cause is there for grim despair:
Yet, since you be Spaniards, despair not.
I sail this very day for Hispaniola
There to hasten necessary succor.
Lest it be said that we, like cowards,
Abandoned under stress our chosen course
I shall leave, of you all, seventy here.
Nay, until I be finished, murmur not.
I appointed in my absence as Governor, Francisco Pizarro,
Knowing you believe, my men, in the courage that is his.

And more, lest you doubt of my returning,
I shall leave, under your charge, all gold.
Remain faithful unto your post;
Remain faithful unto your leader;
Then, if in fifty days I be not come again,
Take as your own the two small brigantines
And depart, with duty done, wheresoever you list.
This I say but as a last precaution,
For,—shall I not return to you?
Trust me! forget not God! be true!"
Thus spoke to his soldiers Alonzo de Ojeda
Governor, in the King's name, of Neuva Andalusia,
Brave man, incompetent leader, ill-fated,
Thus spoke he from the parapet of San Sebastian
And with the coming of the night had sailed away,
Never, despite his promise, to return.
Pizarro, stalwart of body, steady of mind,
One who kept and kept it well his own counsel,
One cruel, severe, determined,
One who was obeyed yet shrunk from,
Commanded, as Ojeda had behested, in his stead.
No tyro's negligent office his!
Food, by hook or crook, must be obtained;
Dissatisfaction and mutiny quelled;
Attack by night and day to be repulsed.
Silence and heat, and hunger,
And all about the small stockade
The inward pressing of the circling jungle
Save where, a strip of blue, a strip of hope, the sea!
God! how they grew to fear that forest,
Heavy, and green, and menace haunted,
A dark impenetrable wall of vegetation,
Twisted trunks, twisted vines, and twisted shadows,
Wherein lurked horror and the horror of horror!
Arrows, furtive-winged and poison-pointed
Would rise as rise startled birds,
Curve up a moment in skyey flight,
Then, with long-drawn sibilant sighs,
Rush to claim the poor unwary, earthward.

Jungle, and sea, and canescent sun,
And the labored passage of the days!
"Are we fools," they cried, "still to wait?
Twenty, thirty, forty days have passed!
Still no white sail peaks the blue!
Death and starvation claim us one by one!
Let us, ere it be too late, depart!"
But wait they did, even the fifty days,
Restrained to duty by the grim Pizarro,
A man they hated, admired, feared,
Yet a man,—they obeyed.
And when at last the time for their release—
"Now," swore they, "by Christ! we shall depart!"
And would straighway have rushed pell-mell
Upon the two small, anchored brigantines
Had not, with imperative gesture, Pizarro stayed them.
"You are," his level voice arraigned, "truly fools!
Else, long since, had you made your count
And found those tiny cockle-shells of boats
Incapable by half of carrying the whole of you!"
They hesitated; they examined; they confirmed.
With desperate eyes ablaze with fear;
With hands and feet that shook in ague;
With lips grown dryer far than dry;
They surged them back to where Pizarro stood,
Gazing, seemingly impassive, across the sea.
"It is," they moaned, "even as you say!
Who shall go and who, alas, shall stay?
Ah, Mother of God, what plight is ours!"
Looking with eyes untenanted by emotion
Upon the men gone, like a flook of sheep, afraid—
"There is a way," he said, "to make decision
Of who shall go and who shall stay.
There is a way,—were you men!"
And the pitiful things with blood-shot eyes,
With white lips edging whiter teeth,
With bony, tremulous talon-hands,
Replied, as in a whisper, "We be men!"
And Pizarro, master of himself and them,

Seemed, in the moveless clarity of sunlight,
Some epic god directing destiny.
"So," he answered, "since you affirm yourselves as men
I shall inform you of the one and only way,
Fair to all and partial, in the end, to none,
Whereby may be chosen among us all
Those who shall go and those who shall stay!
Once more, I ask you: be you men?"
"Aye," croaked they, "we be men!"
"Then"—and here his voice rose, dominant—
"In this place and on this spot shall we remain
Until death, impartial, has weeded us,
Those who shall go from those who shall stay!"
"Those who shall go from those who shall stay!"
Echoed, in toneless notes, the broken men:
And "Those who shall go from those who shall stay!"
Reëchoed eerily the whispering jungle.
Then, like an accolade of doom, fell silence
Enfolding avidly unto its inscrutable self,
Forest, and sea, and depthless sky,
And those bowed of head, stooped of shoulder,
Standing, muted and motionless,
Before one who, with hand aloft, rendered judgment.

The Budget *Arthur C. Inman*

THE COBBLER IN THE MOON

I

Cobbler, cease your stitching!
Put down your awl!
I've long been waiting
Before your stall.

Cobbler, cease your pegging!
  Who pays your wage?
And whose the ugly,
  Dry shoes of Age?

I have shoes for mending;
  A patch or two
Will make them nearly
  As good as new.

Mine too worn for patching?
  It cannot be
The shoes just finished
  Were made for me?

II

Time went dancing down the road
  Yesterday;
It was sweet to watch Time dance
  On her way.

Not one sigh was in my heart!
  How could I
Know that when to-morrow came
  I should cry?

III

Joy came winging down to me,
  A brown, song-throated bird,
But on a honeyed tree's dark branch
  A scarlet note was heard.

Joy was singing, soft and low,
  A tender little lay,
But, oh, my ears were deafened by
  The scarlet note that day!

IV

Once I cried a little cry,
  Nor wiped the tears away;
And bitter was the taste of them
  The long, long day.

Oh, but that was long ago!
  To-day I sit apart
And smile and watch young laughter run
  About my heart!

V

I cannot bear to hear the grasses sing!
  Their tiny fingers press the notes of grief
Where apple blossoms pinkly sway and swing
  And nod to each uncurling, greening leaf.

I cannot bear to hear the grasses sing!
  Nor watch them tiptoe on the sun-sweet ground,
For, oh, I know how their small hands will cling
  Upon the earth that is my body's mound!

VI

If I am quiet, when the twilight comes,
  My dead love I will see;
Like breathless whisper in a lilac bloom
  My love will come to me.

If I am quiet, all the lapis night,
  My love will be my guest;
But, oh, that she may never touch my hand
  Nor lean against my breast!

VII

My feet are shod in golden shoes,
  That glimmer in the sun,
With lacings made of sweet delight
  And laughter's fun.

The soles so studded are with nails
  That press up, prick and pry,
I can but sit still in a chair
  And softly cry!

The Conservative *Winifred Virginia Jackson*

FINALITY

The farm was lonely, set so far
  Back from the town;
If neighbors came, he'd rant and rave
  If they sat down.

And when they went he forced upon
  Her hateful thought,
And nagged; made ugly use of words
  With meaning fraught.

Her back was bent with work she'd done
  Beyond her strength;
For he planned more than she could do
  In each day's length.

The days seemed all alike to her
  Until, one day,
She found a blue bird, maimed in wing,
  So bright and gay

She loved it, cared for it, and soon
  The bird loved her;
When he came, she would hide it and
  It would not stir.

One noon he came and caught her with
  The bird in play;
He killed it right before her in
  A fearful way.

A neighbor came, to ask about
A plough, that night;
He never could forget that strange
And awful sight.

She'd used the kitchen knife on him
And he was dead;
She sat, a bruised and battered thing
From feet to head,

And hummed a little song, or spoke
A tender word,
And tried to make blue feathers stay
Upon a bird!

The Conservative *Winifred Virginia Jackson*

THE TRICKSY TUNE

The Hired Man Speaks:

"He never spoke a civil word
To her; it was his rule
To snarl or shout; his best for her
Was 'Mooncalf, dolt an' fool!'"

The Story:

The house was built back from the Road;
It stood there grim and gray
And silent, 'mid great aspen trees
That quivered night and day.

The Road was narrow; old stone walls
Arose on either side
Begrudging from the farm the land
The roadbed had to gride.

And she had lived with him and drudged
For over twenty years;
He drove her on, from harrowing
To breaking in the steers.

At first when she was called a fool,
A hurt look dulled her eyes,
And she would slip off by herself
And have her little cries.

But once he caught her; after that
She never dared to cry;
The days seemed all alike to her
That wearily went by.

And often, when he snarled and cursed,
She played a little game;
She tried to make believe that he
Had called her some sweet name.

Then one day came a tricksy tune
That hummed within her head;
In spite of all that she could do
It held the words he said.

She heard the song and shuddered at
Its "Fool, dolt, fool, dolt, fool!"
The while she gripped her hard, worn hands
And drabber looked and cool.

And this kept up for weeks; she worked
With hope to still the song
By weariness; it sometimes went away
But would not stay for long.

When evening came, he sat about
The kitchen while she rid
The sink of dishes, nagging her
Through everything she did.

And then he'd go to sleep and snore,
  Sprawled in the rocking chair;
The light shone on his long, gray beard
  And bristling, grizzly hair.

And so he lolled; she mended, darned,
  The while she scarce could see;
The song beat time within her head
  That ached unceasingly.

A day came harder than the rest;
  He snarled at her and raved,
And of the nagging words he knew
  There was no word he saved.

And night came with the supper; wash
  Of dishes in the sink;
And afterwards his snores; her song;
  She ceased to try to think.

The Hired Man Speaks:

"I found him crooked upon the floor;
  The ax was sharp, for he
Had sharpened it that day an' whet
  It sharp as it could be.

She didn't notice me; she sat
  As white's a sheet, but cool,
An' hummed a song: the words wan't much,
  Jest, 'Mooncalf, dolt an' fool!'"

The Conservative — *Winifred Virginia Jackson*

EYES

When life is very lonely
I close my eyes and go
Across a field and up a hill,
A way I know;

And there I find a garden
With a little house in it,
And both are wistful whispering,
"Come in and sit!"

Then you come, always singing,
On down the garden's walk,
And we, in white front doorway, stand
And softly talk.

I often light a candle,
In my small sitting-room,
To show you some new picture or
A bit of bloom.

And all our time together
You love as much as I:
But, oh, my open eyes that watch
You passing by!

The Conservative — *Winifred Virginia Jackson*

DEAFNESS

Wall-mountain rimmed around the sky
And bellied down, a bowl
With chipped and crackled edge; the farm
Dropped in like leaf-lopped cole.

Scrub trees crouched low on mountainside,
  Their fingers locked and bared
Upon black rocks; at base great spruce
  Stood close and leaned and stared.

The house, with up-curled shingles, hugged
  The ground, a silent thing,
Like a gray bird squatting on its perch
  In a cage, and cannot sing.

When she went up to bake for him,
  To tend the house and such,
His deafness was a sorry chafe
  She pitied overmuch.

A day came when he ceased to speak;
  She did not care, for he
Was far more ugly in his speech
  Than there was need to be.

But when the long days dragged on by
  Without a word from him,
The crumbs of peace fell from her mind
  As leaves drop from a limb.

At first she zigzagged in her mind
  'Twixt old Hen Levy's Place
And his: she knew Four Corners brooked
  No showing of her face.

And then she planned shrill words to shriek
  To stab his deafness through;
And he would watch, with cunning eye.
  Her stirred mind's boil and brew.

Then slyly he would egg her on:
  He'd cup his ear with hand,
The while her throat rasped hoarse with words
  She hoped he's understand.

In summer loneliness was lulled
  By birds that came to sing;
An old black creaker, by the door,
  Was always a friendly thing.

Slim poplars grew close to the barn
  And whispered all day long;
The Plymouth Rocks scratched in their shade
  And cackled or made song.

But in the winter when the jays
  Sat shrieking, limb to limb,
It seemed somehow that he must hear;—
  That she *must* talk with him.

And when a lone, lean crow would light
  Upon a fire-stubbed pine,
It seemed a black thought from her heart,
  That blurred her brain like wine.

One day a storm drove down; the wind
  Banked snow in drifts on farm,
Encircling, with one deep drift,
  The house like a gripping arm.

She shoveled a path from house to barn;
  The cattle must be fed:
He let them go a day and night—
  At her plea shook his head.

The crow came to the barn that night;
  She took care of the cat;
The crow, on top-loft ladder's round,
  In brooding silence sat.

When Sunday came the storm had cleared.
  Some city folks snow-shoed
Through Toby's Gap to Brimmer's Place,
  And one of them, a dude,

Was cold, and knocked upon the door;
  When no one answered, he
Just turned the knob and went on in—
  To see what he could see.

Old Aaron sat, bound in a chair;
  His face was snarled with fear;
His hair cut off'n him quite close;
  His throat cut, ear to ear.

She sat in a rocker, muttering,
  A-waggling of her head;
But when she saw the dude, she rose:—
  "He heard! He spoke!" she said.

The Conservative *Winifred Virginia Jackson*

HOOFIN' IT

Pork an'
Beans an'
  Apple pie!
Doughnuts,
Swagen,
  By Gor-ri!
We'll hit
Great Pond
  By an' by!

I am but a river hog,
  River hog, river hog!
I am but a river hog
  Hoofin' it to Great Pond!

Ellsworth is a meachin' town,
  Sick'em town, lick'em town,
Ellsworth is a meachin' town,
  Ring-a-round-a-rosy!

Ellsworth has a pretty pound,
  Pretty pound, pretty pound,
Ellsworth has a pretty pound—
  Pin on me a posy!

Waltham has no use for us,
  Use for us, use for us;
Waltham has no use for us
  When our heads are groggy!

They wun't give us feather beds,
  Feather beds, feather beds;
They wun't give us feather beds—
  No, we bunk with hoggy!

K-J he don't give a damn,
  Give a damn, give a damn;
K-J he don't give a damn
  If in hell we're seated!

Great Pond's miles an' miles away,
  Miles away, miles away;
Great Pond's miles an' miles away
  But the soup is heated!

K-J's waitin' there for us,
  There for us, there for us;
K-J's waitin' there for us—
  He's a damn good-fellow!

K-J makes us pick our shirts,
  Pick our shirts, pick our shirts,
K-J makes us pick our shirts—
  Makes us work O hell-o!

I am but a river hog,
  River hog, river hog,
I am but a river hog
  Hoofin' it to Great Pond!

Pork an'
Beans an'
Apple pie!
Doughnuts,
Swagen.
By Gor-ri!
We'll hit
Great Pond
By an' by!

The Conservative *Winifred Virginia Jackson*

THE PURCHASE

Once, on a gold May morning,
As I walked through a town,
I met a Merchant crying,
"One white, one purple gown!"

He stopped me, swift demanding,
"Which will you have of me?
This white—is yours for nothing!
This purple—thalers three!"

"I'll take from you, Old Merchant,
The gown for which I pay!"
I gayly donned the garment
And went my careless way!

The skies grew dark and darker;
A fog brought mystery;
Beside me stalked black shadows
That pecked the heart of me!

I sought the wary Merchant;
He gave me but one look:
"Hope's robe was yours for nothing!
Despair's was what you took!"

The Conservative *Winifred Virginia Jackson*

JAPANESE NIGHT-SONG

The shadow of a heron's wing is on the water,
And the pines have drawn slim fingers
Across the moon.

Hush—
Breathe lightly, wind in the plum-tree!
Scatter your dreams
Like petals over her heart.

The Measure — *Ellen Janson*

"SHADOWY—UNDER MY WINDOW"

Shadowy—under my window—
Your low reed sobs
Its desert love-song to the remembering stars.
Shadowy—
All the night my breasts are lilies,
My lips are passion-flowers.

At dawn
I remember how gray sands have heaped
Upon your grave,
Wind-blown—these thousand years.

The Measure — *Ellen Janson*

THE CREATION

(A Negro Sermon)

And God stepped out on space,
And He looked around and said,
"I'm lonely—
I'll make me a world."

And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said, *"That's good!"*

Then God reached out and took the light in His hands,
And God rolled the light around in His hands
Until He made the sun;
And He set the sun a-blazing in the heavens.
And the light that was left from making the sun
God gathered it up in a shining ball
And flung it against the darkness,
Spangling the night with the moon and stars.
Then down between
The darkness and the light
He hurled the world;
And God said, *"That's good!"*

Then God himself stepped down—
And the sun was on His right hand,
And the moon was on His left;
The stars were clustered above His head,
And the earth was under His feet.
And God walked, and where He trod
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out
And bulged the mountains up.
Then He stopped and looked and saw
That the earth was hot and barren.
So God stepped over to the edge of the world
And He spat out the seven seas;
He batted His eyes, and the lightnings flashed;
He clapped His hands, and the thunders rolled;
And the waters above the earth came down,
The cooling waters came down.

Then the green grass sprouted,
And the litle red flowers blossomed,
The pine tree pointed his finger to the sky,
And the oak spread out his arms,
The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of the ground,
And the rivers ran down to the sea;
And God smiled again,
And the rainbow appeared,
And curled itself around His shoulder.

Then God raised His arm and He waved His hand
Over the sea and over the land,
And He said, "Bring forth! Bring forth!"
And quicker than God could drop His hand,
Fishes and fowls,
And beasts and birds
Swam the rivers and the seas,
Roamed the forests and the woods,
And split the air with their wings.
And God said, *"That's good!"*

Then God walked around,
And God looked around
On all that He had made.
He looked at His sun,
And He looked at His moon,
And He looked at His little stars;
He looked on His world
With all its living things,
And God said, *"I'm lonely still."*

Then God sat down
On the side of a hill where He could think;
By a deep wide river He sat down;
With His head in His hands,
God thought and thought,
Till He thought, *"I'll make me a man!"*

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He knelt Him down;
And there the great God Almighty,
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of His hand;
This Great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till He shaped it in His own image;

Then into it He blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen, Amen.

The Freeman — *James Weldon Johnson*

COSMOS FLOWERS

Grey clouds, with sudden lakes of blue—
A mournful, monotonous wind like wailing women—
And against the crumbling wall
Hundreds of cosmos flowers,
Startling, leopard-like, sensual,
Wave on their stalks of feathery green;
And above them the purple morning-glories,
A blare of glorious trumpets,
Cling to the yellowing wall;
And a negro, his torn white shirt
Revealing in jarred tears his ebony skin,
The gleaming muscles, the cat-like, strong
Animal body, labors on crooked knees,
Clearing the autumn garden of twigs and the flying
leaves. . . .

Scheherazade!
Scheherazade!

The cosmos flowers, my Dove,
Are as thine enticing eyes, and the slender grace of
their stems
Thy languid body that leans and sways and allures,
Weary of telling thy tales and glad of illicit love,
Scheherazade, soul of the cosmos flower!

Behold, in thy chamber, above the fountain fall,
The hidden silver fingers of women sound on lutes,
Chanting from latticed recesses
Surâhs out of Al Koran, the Wisdom of God;
Thy companions, in blue trousers,
One by one steal away to hidden rooms
Where slaves or lovers await to embrace them all night
long;
And at thy command the glistening negroes come,
Bare of breast, and turbanned in white, with trays
Of coloured sherbets, and dates, and lemons, and
sweets,
And a eunuch walks at their head,
Grave and useless to thee, O Moon, for love, whose
master
Is hunting to-day the lion, but I, O Delight,
Thy slave, the Gardener's Son, in blue and gold
Lie beside thee upon the tiger skins,
Eager for love and knowing to-morrow I die.

Scheherazade!
Scheherazade!

Fate is fate, O My Soul!
Thy moon-like eyes, thy thin, sweet eyebrows, the
breasts
Hid and revealed by thy silken vests, the alluring
Mouth, the tapering nails, and the slippered feet—
Save only to-day are dust, but the cosmos flower

Blooms forever, and ever the shrill-voiced singers
Chant that Allah is Allah, and man is as rain and dust.
Yield to me therefore, Pomegranate Flower! Thy lips
Are heavy with love, thine eyes are riddles, thine hair
Hath woven the night about thy face, its moon!
And eunuch and slave and the throbbing tambourines
And the dancing girls and thy master, O Star, are
dreams,
And only the Gardener's Son with the close-cropped
golden hair,
And thou, Beloved, we two together and love,
Only these three abide, but abide for a moment, and
go.

Scheherazade!
Scheherazade!

The Freeman *Howard Mumford Jones*

OH, WHEN I DIE—

The poet names his burial-stead.
That string is frayed by long-stilled hands.
And few, I guess, have the bed
Their half-forgotten verse demands.
To worn string and futile plea
Listen awhile: when I am dead
After all, bury me
Underneath an Apple Tree.

Underneath an Apple Tree—
Let the grim roots work their will—
Grip, suck, strain, distil.
The debtor's body for the debt,
For all the happily heavy score
Of many a revel, against me set
Plain on the Orchard Tavern's door.

What path of mine but knows my debt?
  How far apart my cores were thrown!
Town, meadow, peak, shore,
  Road, trail, wayside stone,
    Hearth, desk, even bed
(Shudder, Prissy) knew my needs,
And not a core but showed the seeds.
  Milk and honey, wine and bread!
  Wherefore, in the Roman way
  Deal with him who cannot pay—
The debtor's body for the debt:
  After all, bury me
  (If that is all, and this is me)
  Underneath an Apple Tree.

  There is more, as I think:
When I am done with meat and drink
Such as beasts have, there shall be
Other Apples waiting me
  No bodiless ghost can eat of them,
So I shall haunt my burial-tree
  Until the first spring-noon is warm:
My body's master-essences
  Shall climb through bole and branch and stem,
  Slip through soft blossom-throats, and form
About me, at command. How far,
I wonder, those bright Other Orchards are?

Contemporary Verse *William Laird*

THE TOO HIGH

That bird in the maple next my eaves,
  Last bud-break of May,
At faintest of first dawn, one perceives,
Loved—in his rapture of life and leaves—
  As I love to-day.

His heart was so full of it, his throat
  Could scarce, at first, free
The song, that took fire, climbed, note by note,
Neared heaven, came short, turned sad, fell remote,
  Lay still. So with me.

Harper's Magazine *Benjamin R. C. Low*

THE HOUSE WITH THE MARBLE STEPS

He built the house to show his neighbors
That decent thrift could lead to this,
A giddy reason for his labors,
A bright brick apothesis.

He was not one to be bulldozed
By sentiment, and he had planned
Past whispered sneers when he foreclosed
The mortgage on this very land.

He'd forced his way with prudent greed
While they at best remained the same.
He gauged the folly of a creed
Which keeps a lame purse always lame.

Well, here it was, and in the road
He stood and tallied beam and rafter.
The cost would be a heavy load
He'd tell you, twisting into laughter.

The window-edges were of stone,
A soapy limestone smooth and fair.
The floors were all hard wood and none
Tailed off to pine beneath a stair.

If he were old and quite infirm,
His house was very fresh and young,
And envy is a winding worm—
These thoughts were pepper to his tongue.

And so he watched it grow and grow,
And jotted down the things he heard,
Scheming to balance by the blow
His house should deal as final word.

To crown the whole and go beyond
Whatever yet had been attempted.
In his small town, he signed a bond
Which would most certainly have emptied

The pockets of quite half his friends,
Even to him it was a point,
But when a man aims at such ends
He must keep stiff in every joint.

He bought a quarry's good half year
Of first-class, fine-grained marble output,
He paid a mason very near
As much again to have it cut.

The sharp white polished steps were grand
Descending from the stucco porch.
They glittered like a marching band,
They mounted upward like a torch.

But he had taken to his bed
Before the last was set in place,
And one week later he was dead
With a slow smile upon his face.

The marble flashed beneath the fall
Of undertakers' feet who carried
His coffin to the funeral
Within the house. And there he tarried

For fifteen minutes more or less,
And "dust to dust" they read above him.
Now who had gained in bitterness—
For not one soul was there to love him?

They gaped upon the shining floors,
Their eyes scanned ceiling heights and blocked them.
When all was done, they shut the doors
And shrugged their shoulders as they locked them.

The house is charming now with weeds
Sprung all about, the steps are mellow
With little grass and flower-seeds
Drifting across their sun-stained yellow.

Empty it stands and so has stood
More years than the town clerk can tell.
No legend has it he was good,
No tale reports that he did well.

They tried to sell it, off and on,
But not a person wants to buy,
Though visitors who've come and gone
Remember it against the sky
In shrewd and sweet proportions glowing
Above a flight of marble steps where grass is growing.

The New Republic *Amy Lowell*

TEXAS

I went a-riding, a-riding,
Over a great long plain,
And the plain went a-sliding, a-sliding
Away from my bridle-rein.

Fields of cotton, and fields of wheat,
Thunder-blue gentians by a wire fence,
Standing cypress, red and tense,
Holding its flower rigid like a gun,
Dressed for parade by the running wheat,
By the little bouncing cotton. Terribly sweet
The cardinals sing in the live-oak trees,
And the long plain breeze,
The prairie breeze,
Blows across from swell to swell
With a ginger smell.
Just ahead where the road curves round,
A long-eared rabbit makes a bound
Into a wheat-field, into a cotton-field,
His track glitters after him and goes still again
Over to the left of my bridle-rein.

But over to the right is a glare—glare—glare—
Of sharp glass windows,
A narrow square of brick jerks thickly up above the cotton plants,
A raucous mercantile thing flaring the sun from thirty-six windows,
Brazenly declaring itself to the lovely fields.
Tram-cars run like worms about the feet of this thing,
The coffins of cotton-bales feed it,
The threshed wheat is its golden blood.
But here it has no feet,
It has only the steep ironic grin of its thirty-six windows,
Only its basilisk eyes counting the fields,
Doing sums or how many buildings to a city, all day and all night.

Once they went a-riding, a-riding,
Over the great long plain,
Cowboys singing to their dogey steers,
Cowboys perched on forty-dollar saddles,
Riding to the North, six months to get there,

Six months to reach Wyoming,
"Hold up, paint horse, herd the little dogies,
Over the lone prairie."
Bones of dead steers,
Bones of cowboys,
Under the wheat, maybe.

The sky-scraper sings another way,
A tune of steel, of wheels, of gold.
And the ginger breeze blows all day
Tanged with flowers and mold.
And the Texas sky whirls down, whirls down,
Taking long looks at the fussy town.
An old sky and a long plain
Beyond, beyond, my bridle-rein.

The New Republic — *Amy Lowell*

FLUTE-PRIEST SONG FOR RAIN

Ceremonial at the Sun Spring

Whistle under the water,
Make the water bubble to the tones of the flute.
I call the bluebirds' song into the water:
Wee-kee! Wee-kee-kee!
Dawn is coming,
The morning star shines upon us.
Bluebird singing to the West clouds,
Bring the humming rain.

Water-rattles shake,
Flute whistles,
Star in Heaven shines.
I blow the oriole's song,
The yellow song of the North.
I call rain clouds with my rattles:
Wee-kee-kee, oriole.
Pattering rain.

To the South I blow my whistle,
To the red parrot of the South I call.
Send red lightning,
Under your wings
The forked lightning.
Thunder-rattles whirl
To the sky waters.
Fill the springs.
The water is moving.
Wait—

Whistle to the East
With a magpie voice.
Wee-kee! Wee-kee-kee!
Call the storm-clouds
That they come rushing.
Call the loud rain.

Why does it not come?
Who is bad?
Whose heart is evil?
Who has done wickedness?
I weep,
I rend my garments,
I grieve for the sin which is in this place.
My flute sobs with the voice of all birds in the water.
Even to the six directions I weep and despair.
Come, O winds, from the sides of the sky,
Open your bird-beaks that rain may fall down.
Drench our fields, our houses,
Fill the land
With tumult of rain.

The Dial *Amy Lowell*

A RHYME OUT OF MOTLEY

"I grasped a thread of silver; it cut me to the bone—
I reached for an apple; it was bleak as a stone—
I reached for a heart, and touched a raw blade—
And this was the bargain God had made
For a little gift of speech

Set a cubit higher than the common reach,
A debt running on until the fool is dead."

Carve a Pater Noster to put at his head
As a curse or a prayer,
And leave him there.

The Literary Review — *Amy Lowell*
N. Y. Evening Post

A GRAVE SONG

I've a pocketful of emptiness for you, my Dear.
I've a heart like a loaf was baked yesteryear,
I've a mind like ashes spilt a week ago,
I've a hand like a rusty, cracked corkscrew.

Can you flourish on nothing and find it good?
Can you make petrifaction do for food?
Can you warm yourself at ashes on a stone?
Can you give my hand the cunning which has gone?

If you can, I will go and lay me down
And kiss the edge of your purple gown.
I will rise and walk with the sun on my head.
Will you walk with me, will you follow the dead?

The New Republic — *Amy Lowell*

A PRAYER

Love us, Lord, but not too much.
  Come thou near, yet not too near.
All thy laughing splendor spoils
  What we daily see and fear,
What we bear, and do, and touch.
Love us still, but not too much.

Come thou near, Lord, not too near:
  Let us breathe thee through our lips.
Even now I saw thy hue
  In the maple's yellow tips,
When a leaf, so gay, so dear,
Fell—but come thou not more near.

Let us breathe thee through our lips!
  Do thou enter in our eyes!
Touch us that we not forget:
  Make us simple still, and wise.
Circling us, thy finger slips—
Let us breathe thee through our lips.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Jessie MacDonald*

THE VANISHED YEARS

I

I climb them step by step—
The vanished years.
Stumbling, I pause to look below
Down wells of time, so black, so deep
Their waters keep
No sound,
Nor show a star,
Nor hold a memory.

II

Sometimes I kneel and look above
That dark stairway
At years to come;
My fingers clasp my fears,
Where my hopes go.
Up there beyond that last, gray step,
Afar,
Within that roof of mist,
What is that shape in flight,
Dim, strong and slow?

III

"A wing," some say;
Some answer, "Love";
And some say, "Night
And sleep."
But I?
I do not know.

The Freeman *Jeanette Marks*

KEATS TO FANNY BRAWNE

Fanny! If in your arms my soul could slip—
Arms that my love first fancied—not the grave!
Cities of Hate and Madness round me rave;
And Love with anguished finger at the lip
Fares shelterless! These have my fellowship—
Memory and Loneliness! What's left? To brave
Death! But before it Tragedy: not to crave
You changed or truly seen! The hemlock drip
Of rains upon half-lived or ruined springs,
Where you dance, smiling, numbs me now, and soothes
Hopes that once sought a beauty gone before.
Losses have stripped me! But the vanishings
Of winter winds leave me to starry truths—
Who once desired you, but desire no more!

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Edgar Lee Masters*

TO AN INHABITANT OF PARADISE

How goes it in your star-lit world-
The silences, the brooding wood?
Does there the tiger hunt no more,
The falcon twitter for his hood?

Have you stripped all the boughs that talk
And calmed the torrents from the hill?
Are lamb and wolf now reconciled?
Is hunger banished from your sill?

Does that inexorable whip,
Which drove us heedless face to face,
No longer burn along your veins
Or cut your new dispassionate grace?

Do you watch struggle unconcerned
Hear voices call you and not speak,
There in your timeless acres feel
Above your kinship with the weak?

Oh, guard the gates that shut you in!
Make sure the world behind your eyes!
My world of men and lust and wheels
Begins to march on Paradise.

The Yale Review *Scudder Middleton*

PASSER MORTUUS EST

Death devours all lovely things.
Lesbia with her sparrow—
Shares the darkness. Presently
Every bed is narrow.

Unremembered as old rain,
  Dries the sheer libation,
And the little, petulant hand
  Is an annotation.

After all, my erstwhile dear,
  My no longer cherished,
Need we say it was not love,
  Now that love is perished.

The Century *Edna St. Vincent Millay*

TO A POET THAT DIED YOUNG

Minstrel, what have you to do
With this man that after you
Sharing not your happy fate,
Sat at England's Laureate?
Vainly in these iron days
Strives the poet in your praise,
Minstrel, by whose singing side
Beauty walked, until you died.

Still, though none should hark again,
Drones the blue-fly in the pane,
Thickly crusts the blackest moss,
Blows the rose its musk across,
Floats the boat that is forgot
None the less to Camelot.

Many a bard's untimely death
Lends unto his verses breath;
Here's a song was never sung:
Growing old is dying young.
Minstrel, what is this to you:
That a man you never knew,
When your grave was fair and green,
Sat and gossiped with a queen?

Thalia knows how rare a thing
Is it, to grow old and sing.
When the brown and tepid tide
Closes in on every side;
Who shall say if Shelley's gold
Had withered it to grow old?

The New Republic *Edna St. Vincent Millay*

SONNET

I see so clearly now my similar years
Renew each other, shod in rusty black,
Like one hack following another hack
In meaningless procession, dry of tears
Driven empty, lest the noses, sharp as shears,
Of gutter urchins at a hearse's back
Should sniff a man died friendless, and attack
With silly scorn his deaf, triumphant ears—

I see so clearly how my life must run,
One year behind another year, until
At length these bones that leap into the sun
Are lowered into the gravel and lie still,
I would at times the funeral were done
And I abandoned on the ultimate hill.

The Century *Edna St. Vincent Millay*

KEATS

(1821—1921)

When sometimes, on a moony night, I've passed
A street-lamp, seen my doubled shadow flee,
I've noticed how much darker, clearer cast,
The full moon poured her silhouette of me.

Just so of spirits. Beauty's silver light
Limns with a purer ray, and tenderer too:
Men's clumsy gestures, to unearthly sight,
Surpass the shapes they show by human view.

On this brave world, where few such meteors fell,
Her youngest son, to save us, Beauty flung.
He suffered and descended into hell—
And comforts still the ardent and the young.

Drunken of moonlight, dazed by draughts of sky,
Dizzy with stars, his mortal fever ran:
His utterance a moon-enchanted cry
Not free from folly—for he too was man.

And now and here, a hundred years away,
Where topless towers shadow golden streets,
The young men sit, nooked in a cheap café,
Perfectly happy. . . talking about Keats.

The Bookman *Christopher Morley*

THE TAVERN OF THE FOOLS

I knew of an honest cleanly inn where men much profit had,
And some came in from the roaring town, and some from the roaring seas;
They talked in the open way of those who are not too proud to be sad,
They sat in a ruddy ingle, at night, and took their ease.
For terrible is the sunlight that makes men fear to be dead.
But comforting is the well-swept hearth that flickers gold and gules,
And there men spoke withouten shame, and curious words were said—
Ungoaded by a clock they sat, in the Tavern of the Fools.

Those men were Fools; and each one bore some
secret foolish stain—
Some were the Fools who loved the world and were
mocked for being kind,
Some had twisted a golden life with quarrel and
peevish pain,
But all were doubtful, and all had left their
wisdom far behind.
And ah how heavenly (poor Fools!) to lay their
loads aside
And all, with simple courtesy, to take the word in
turn
And itemize their lack of wit—but not in silly pride,
For when a Fool speaks modestly, then other Fools
can learn.

There was a Fool who dreamed a dream that Love
was always young,
There was a Fool whose habit was to turn the
other cheek;
There was a Fool whose eyes would shine when brave
old songs were sung,
And one whose face was strangely carved, and
rarely did he speak.
They did not fret on little things, and if the talk ran
thin
The pewter made its tilting round, according to the
rules:
They sat and stared upon the fire, all peaceably
akin—
Some active Fools, some passive Fools, some
honorary Fools.

But sometimes, in a genial mood, the younger mem-
bers vowed
That it was wrong their fellowship should be so
limited—
"The room is large, the hearth is wide; while we
don't want a crowd,

Still, why should we be selfish with our privilege?"
they said.
"For since man has this golden root of folly in his
breast,
Why may not lovely woman too possess some
molecules
Of sheer delightful foolishness? Let's put her to
the test,
And not be too exclusive in our parliament of Fools."

So they debated it. Indeed, they came as near a fuss
As such a reasonable group could ever come. But
then
One thoughtful Fool's objection made them all
unanimous.
"Now there *are* women Fools," he said, "as ran-
dom as the men.
But what's the honor of the Fool? What marks and
qualifies
And makes his melancholy sweet and pure? Why
this, as you'll
Agree: He never *never* will pretend that he is wise—
So how can any woman ever be a Perfect Fool?"

The vote was passed. They realized, more strictly
than before,
The duty that they owed the world, to keep their
folly pure:
And many an eager candidate they turned back at
the door,
And snugly circled round their hearth, fraternally
and sure.
They loved their virtue far too well to heedlessly admit
One bitter taint of wisdom through their mystic
vestibules,
And many a puzzled passenger was palsied in his wit
To hear that cryptic laughter in the Tavern of
the Fools.

THE SCHOOL BOY READS HIS ILIAD

The sounding battles leave him nodding still:
The din of javelins at the distant wall
Is far too faint to wake that weary will
That all but sleeps for cities where they fall.
He cares not if this Helen's face were fair,
Nor if the thousand ships shall go or stay;
In vain the rumbling chariots throng the air
With sounds the centuries shall not hush away.

Beyond the window where the Spring is new,
Are marbles in a square, and tops again,
And floating voices tell him what they do,
Luring his thought from these long-warring men,—
And though the camp be visited with Gods,
He dreams of marbles and of tops, and nods.

Contemporary Verse · *David Morton*

ACQUAINTANCE

All that we know of April is her way
Of coming on the world through gentle springs,
Turning the hedge a whitening line of spray,
Staining the grass with shivered, golden things.
She has a way of rain against the sun,
Of moonlit orchards, ghostly white and still,
And the slow, silver coming, one by one,
Of burning stars above a purple hill.

And this is all we know of such as she,
These shining names she leaves for us to call:
The whitening hedge, the showery apple tree,
And golden jonquils gathering by a wall. . . .
All that we know of April is her way,
And these bright legends we have learned to say.

The Nation · *David Morton*

EXIT

I shall go in the wind
  Down Islip road,
And no one shall mind
  The traveler's load.

A slender tree
  Round the bend to the South
Shall beckon to me
  In the wind's mouth,

And the white-lipped frost
  That clings to the ground
Knows the dream you have lost
  Shall never be found.

The slope of it lingers
  In driven rain,
But the earth's gray fingers,
  Mold it again!

In purple bud
  And in fretted stone,
In channeled blood
  And in crumbled bone—

Mold it again
  In flesh and in flowers,
'Twixt a rain and a rain
  Of April Showers.

The Century — *Edward J. O'Brien*

IN A MOONLIT GARDEN

The moon has cast a spell upon my garden;
Wherever she has laid her cool white fingers
The flowers all yield to her enchantress' sway,
Lilies have added cubits to their stature—
For see how long now are their slender shadows
Stretching so black across the shining way!
The petals of the columbines and roses
And the blue lupins all are touched with silver—
Each pansy's face has lost its look of fun.
But strangest is the spell upon my fountain;
No naiad is it now, but a young gambler,
Tossing up shining pennies one by one.
And very deep appears its shallow basin—
As deep as is the moss that holds my footprints—
And all its fish seem carven, stone-like things;
While for the song these waters sang at morning,
Tinkling in happy chorus with the thrushes,
Prevails a stillness, as of muted strings.

Antoinette De Coursey Patterson
Contemporary Verse

IN THE BARN

The sun, in wanton pride,
Drenches the country-side
With spilt gold from his old autumnal store.
But Scipio sits within the barn's thick gloom,
The merest crack of light coming in the door—
Sits and husks the corn long after working hours.
Vainly for him the autumn bloom
Is on the flowers.
The inside of the barn is velvet black
Except where a gold thread runs along a crack;
And the inquisitive sun thrusts points of light

Through chink and cranny, piercing the midnight.
The dry husks rattle, and his shuffling feet
Keep time to what he sings—an elusive tune,
Husky and monotonous and sweet,
Scarce audible, so softly does he croon
To keep away the evil eye:

Everybody
Who is livin'
Got to die.

Across the evening fields the setting sun
Richly intones toil done.
The home-bound negroes idle in the lanes,
Gossiping as they go; coarse laughter falls
On the resonant air; from a far field cat-calls
Float over, and a banjo's strains.
Shucking corn in the darkness, Scipio in reply
Sits and sings his mournful, husky stave:

Wid a silver spade
You kin dig my grave;
Everybody
Who is livin'
Got to die.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Josephine Pinckney*

IN THE DELTA

The river country's wide and flat
And blurred ash-blue with sun,
And there all work is dreams come true,
All dreams are work begun.

The silted river made for us
The black and mellow soil
And taught us as we conquered him
Courage and faith and toil.

The river town that water-oaks
And myrtles hide and bless
Has broken every law except
The law of kindliness.

And north and south and east the fields
Of cotton close it round,
Where golden billows of the sun
Break with no shade or sound.

Dear is the town, but in the fields
A little house could be,
If built with care and auspices,
A heart's felicity.

O friend, who love not much indoors
Or lamp-lit, peopled ways,
What of a field and house to pass
Our residue of days?

We'd learn of fret and labor there
A patience that we miss
And be content content to be
Nor wish nor hope for bliss.

With the immense untrammeled sun
For brother in the fields
And every night the stars' crusade
Flashing to us their shields.

We'd meet, perhaps, some dusk as we
Turned home to well-earned rest,
Unhurried Wisdom, tender-eyed,
A pilgrim and our guest.

William Alexander Percy
The North American Review

A BRITTANY LOVE SONG

My only love is a sailor lad
Whose home is the fickle sea.
To other girls he gives his smiles,
But his mouth he gives to me.

On Sunday morning after mass
When he is dressed so fine,
He stops before their open doors,
But at night he comes to mine.

O Mary, bless all sailor lads
Whose loves are two, and three,
But mine keep safe from other girls—
Or let him die in the sea!

The Bookman *William Alexander Percy*

COURAGE

Into a brown wood flew a brown bird
In the winter time:
The sky was dark with snow unfallen,
The leaves were bent with rime.

Once north he flew, once south he flew,
He perched in a naked tree.
He looked into the dreary dusk
And whistled merrily.

Contemporary Verse *William Alexander Percy*

THE HOLY WOMEN

I have seen Mary at the cross
And Mary at the tomb
And Mary weeping as she spread her hair
In a leper's room.
But it was not in Bethany
Or groping up Calvary hill
I learned how women break their hearts to ease
Another's ill.

Compassionate and wise in pain,
Most faithful in defeat,
The holy Marys I have watched and loved
Live on our street.

Contemporary Verse — *William Alexander Percy*

"I ACCEPT"

I shall go out as all men go,
Spent flickers in a mighty wind,
Then I shall know, as all must know,
What lies the great gray veil behind.

There may be nothing but a deep
And timeless void without a name
Where no sun hangs, no dead stars sleep,
And there is neither light nor flame.

There may be meadows there and hills,
Mountains and plains and winds that blow,
And flowers bending over rills
Springing from an eternal snow.

There may be oceans white with foam
And great tall ships for hungry men
Who called our little salt seas home
And burn to launch their keels again.

There may be voices I have known,
Cool fingers that have touched my hair.
There may be hearts that were my own,—
Love may abide forever there.

Who knows? Who needs to understand
If there be shadows there, or more,
To live as though a pleasant land
Lay just beyond an open door?

The Outlook *Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer*

THE DREAM

I have a dream
To fill the golden sheath
of a remembered day.

Air
Heavy and massed and blue
as the vapor of opium . . .
Domes
Fired in sulphurous mist . . .
Sea
Quiescent as a gray seal,
And the emerging sun
Spurting up gold
over Sydney smoke-pale,
rising out of the bay.

But the day is an upturned cup,
And its sun a junk of red iron
Guttering in sluggish-green water.
Where shall I pour my dream?

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Lola Ridge*

CACTUS SEED

I

Radiant notes
Piercing my narrow-chested room,
Beating down through my ceiling—
Smeared with unshapen
Belly-prints of dreams
Drifted out of old smokes—
Trillions of icily
Peltering notes
Out of just one canary;
All grown to song,
As a plant to its stalk,
From too long craning at a sky-light
And a square of second-hand blue.

Silvery-strident throat
So assiduously serenading me,
My brain flinches under
The glittering hail of your notes.
Were you not safe behind—rats know what thickness
of—plastered wall,
I might fathom
Your golden delirium
With throttle of finger and thumb,
Shutting valve of bright song.

II

But if—away off—on a fork of grassed earth
Socketing an inlet of blue water . . .
If canaries—do they sing out of cages?—
Flung such luminous notes,
They would sink in the spirit,
Lie germinal . . .
Housed in the soul as a seed in the earth,
To break forth at spring with the crocuses
into young smiles on the mouth . . .

Or, glancing off buoyantly,
Radiate notes in one key
With the sparkle of rain-drops
On the petal of a cactus flower
Focusing the just-out sun.

Cactus . . . why cactus?
God . . . God!
Somewhere . . . away off . . .
Cactus flowers, star-yellow,
Ray out of spiked green;
And empties of sky
Roll you over and over
Like a mother her baby in long grass.
And only the wind scandal-mongers with gum trees,
Pricking multiple leaves at his wondrous story.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Lola Ridge*

ALTITUDE

I wonder
How it would be here with you,
Where the wind
That has shaken off its dust in low valleys
Touches one cleanly
As with a new-washed hand,
And pain
Is as the remote hunger of droning things,
And anger
But a little silence
Sinking into the great silence.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Lola Ridge*

AFTER STORM

Was there a wind?
Tap . . . . . tap . . .
Night pads upon the snow
With moccasined feet,
And it is still . . . . so still . . .
An eagle's feather
Might fall like a stone.

Could there have been a storm,
Mad-tossing golden mane
on the neck of the wind—
Tearing up the sky,
loose-flapping like a tent
about the ice-capped stars?

Cool, sheer and motionless,
The frosted pines
Are jewelled with a million flaming points,
That fling their beauty up in long white sheaves
Till they catch hands with stars.
Could there have been a wind
That haled them by the hair,
And blinding
Blue-forked
Flowers of the lightning
In their leaves?

Tap . . . . tap . . .
Slow-ticking centuries . . .
Soft as bare feet upon the snow . . .
Faint . . . . lulling as heard rain
upon heaped leaves . . .
So silence builds her wall
about a dream impaled.

MOCKERY

Happened that the moon was up before I went to bed,
Poking through the bramble-trees her round gold
head.
I didn't stop for stocking,
I didn't stop for shoe,
But went running out to meet her—oh, the night was
blue!

Barefoot down the hill road, dust beneath my toes;
Barefoot in the pasture smelling sweet of fern and
rose!
Oh, night was running with me,
Tame folk were all in bed—
And the moon was just showing her wild gold head!

But before I reached the hilltop where the bramble-
trees are tall,
I looked to see my lady moon—she wasn't there at
all!—
Not sitting on the hilltop,
Nor slipping through the air,
Nor hanging in the brambles by her bright gold hair!

I walked slowly down the pasture and slowly up the
hill,
Wondering and wondering, and very, very still.
I wouldn't look behind me,
I went at once to bed—
And poking through the window was her bold gold
head!

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Katherine Riggs*

SONNET TO A PLOUGH-WOMAN OF NORWAY

Deep-bosomed, stalwart-limbed, superbly made,
Unconscious of her power and her grace,
Accustomed to the blowzy wind's embrace,
Magnificent, unlettered, unafraid.
She guides her course past interlacing streams
Striding the fields behind her ancient plough,
Or halts beneath some blossoming, frail bough
To rest her beast and give herself to dreams.
Her eyes survey the road, the moor, the peat,
With wide, untroubled gaze, she plays no part,
No joys rise up to suffocate her heart
Because a smile falls lightly at her feet.
To one who comes for her at dusk, perchance,
She lifts a brief intoxicated glance.

Contemporary Verse *Margaret Tod Ritter*

WATER NOISES

When I am playing by myself,
  And all the boys are lost around,
Then I can hear the water go—
  It makes a little talking sound.

Along the rocks below the tree,
  I see it ripple up and wink;
And I can hear it saying on,
  "And do you think? and do you think?"

A bug shoots by that snaps and ticks,
  And a bird flies up beside the tree
To go into the sky to sing.
  I hear it say, "Killdee, killdee!"

Or else a yellow cow comes down
To splash a while and have a drink.
But when she goes I still can hear
The water say, "And do you think?"

Elizabeth Madox Roberts
Poetry, A Magazine of Verse

MY HEART

My heart is beating up and down,
Is walking like some heavy feet.
My heart is going every day,
And I can hear it jump and beat.

At night before I go to sleep
I feel it beating in my head;
I hear it jumping in my neck
And in the pillow on my bed.

And then I make some little words
To go along and say with it—
The men are sailing home from Troy,
And all the lamps are lit.

The men are sailing home from Troy,
And all the lamps are lit.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts
Poetry, A Magazine of Verse

MANY ARE CALLED

The Lord Apollo, who has never died,
Still holds alone his immemorial reign,
Supreme in an impregnable domain
That with his magic he has fortified;
And though melodious multitudes have tried
In ecstacy, in anguish, and in vain,
With invocation sacred and profane
To lure him, even the loudest are outside.

Only at unconjectured intervals,
By will of Him on whom no man may gaze,
By word of Him whose law no man has read,
A questing light may rift the sullen walls,
To cling where mostly its infrequent rays
Fall golden on the patience of the dead.

The New Republic *Edwin Arlington Robinson*

THE LONG RACE

Up the old hill to the old house again,
When fifty years ago the friend was young
Who should be waiting somewhere there among
Old things that least remembered most remain,
He toiled on with a pleasure that was pain
To think how soon asunder would be flung
The curtain half a century had hung
Between the two ambitions they had slain.

They dredged an hour for words, and then were done.
"Good-bye! . . . . You have the same old weather vane—
A little horse that's always on the run."
And all the way down back to the next train,
Down the old hill to the old road again,
It seemed as if the little horse had won.

The New Republic *Edwin Arlington Robinson*

VAIN GRATUITIES

Never was there a man much uglier
In the eyes of other women, or more grim:
"The Lord has filled her chalice to the brim,
So let us pray she's a philosopher,"
They said; and there was more they said of her—
Deeming it, after twenty years with him,
No wonder that she kept her figure slim
And always made you think of lavender.

But she, demure as ever, and as fair,
Almost, as they remembered her before
She found him, would have laughed had she been there;
And all they said would have been heard no more
Than foam that washes on an island shore
Where there are none to listen or to care.

The New Republic *Edwin Arlington Robinson*

LOST ANCHORS

Like a dry fish flung inland far from shore,
There lived a sailor, warped and ocean-browned,
Who told of an old vessel, harbor-drowned
And out of mind a century before,
Where divers, on descending to explore
A legend that had lived its way around
The world of ships, in the dark hulk had found
Anchors, which had been seized and seen no more.

Improving a dry leisure to invest
Their misadventure with a manifest
Analogy that he may read who runs,
The sailor made it old as ocean grass—
Telling of much that once had come to pass
With him, whose mother should have had no sons.

The Nation *Edwin Arlington Robinson*

MONADNOCK THROUGH THE TREES

Before there was in Egypt any sound
Of those who reared a more prodigious means
For the self-heavy sleep of kings and queens
Than hitherto had mocked the most renowned,—
Unvisioned here and waiting to be found,
Alone, amid remote and older scenes,
You loomed above ancestral evergreens
Before there were the first of us around.

And when the last of us, if we know how,
See farther from ourselves than we do now,
Assured with other sight than heretofore
That we have done our mortal best and worst,—
Your calm will be the same as when the first
Assyrians went howling south to war.

The Outlook *Edwin Arlington Robinson*

CALIFORNIA DISSONANCE

There is a peewee bird that cries
"La, sol, me,
"La, sol, me."
He is the only thing that sighs
Beside the western sea.

The blue jays chatter "Tcha! Tcha! Tcha!"
And cheer for California.
The real estate men chortle "Whee!"
And toot the loud calliope.
The sky is blue, the land is glad—
The peewee bird alone is sad
And sings in minor key

"La, sol, me,
"La, sol, me."
He is the only thing that sighs
Beside the western sea.

It was a shock, I own, to see
Sedition sitting in a tree,
Remarking plainly, "La, sol, me,
"La, sol, me,
"La, sol, me."
The peewee bird is very wrong
To voice such sentiments in song
Beside the western sea.

I said: "My bird, you ought to know
Enough to sing 'Do, me, sol, do,'
In major thirds, you see, for so
You'll help to make the country grow."

"You'll make the country grow, my dear—
So lift your little bill and cheer,
'Do, me, sol, do,'
'Do, me, sol, do.
You can't be singing 'la, sol, me,'
We simply *must* have harmony."

I think the bird could not have heard—
He chanted still, I give my word,
"La, sol, me,
La, sol, me."
And gloomed in obstinate dissent
From healthy public sentiment.

And yet I can not help but hope
The peewee bird will cease to mope;
For surely he will feel in time
The influence of the sunny clime;
Ah, yes, the peewee bird will soon
Be thinking lovely thoughts in tune;

The warnings of right-thinking men
Will bring him to himself again.
Converted, he will win to grace
And lift to God a shining face;
And he will be no longer sad
But so obstreperously glad
That he will sing from morn to night
Unbroken pæans of delight!
"Do, me, sol, do,
"Do, me, sol, do."
Which helps to make the country grow.

The Freeman *James Rorty*

YDONE SINGS TO HIS PEOPLE

1

The morning comes riding to our market place
On the shoulders of a little hill;
And when it tires
Spending its golden coins,
And is heavy with sleep,
The mountains will take the day on its back
And carry it to the still dark House.

2

At night
O people of Karthana
Your evil deeds
Will sit in trees,
Like owls
And hoot you.

3

Having died
Arkon the fisherman
Went to heaven;
Thus when a comet
Falls in the skies
Be not frightened
O people of Karthana,
It is only a silver trout
Falling from a fisherman's line.

4

I thought my arrow struck a swan,
But it was only the moon
Come down to bathe in the waters of the Khava.

5

We are trees
And our days
Hang on branches,
Like leaves;
In the morning
We hide
Behind the strong walls of our songs,
But the wind finds us
In the evening,
And takes our songs
And our days
Like leaves.

6

Like an army with lit torches,
The first frosts
Have come upon my fields
Burning the young corn.

7

Like wolves
The winds came upon my fruit trees,
And tore them to the ground;
But there are no stones
To kill the wolves of the wind,
And no curses to wither their teeth.

The New Republic *David Rosenthal*

HILLTOP DUET

The Tree
Old Vagabond Wind,
Will you never take root?
Will you never settle down
To the soil,
And bear fruit?

The Wind
Old Stay-at-home Tree,
Will you never take wing?
Will you never break loose,
And roam free
Like a king?

Both
The earth is for you,
And the air is for me—
But the poor little fishes,
(Those little white fishes)
Must stay in the sea,
In the cold slimy sea—
Brrr . . .

Emmy Veronica Sanders
Poetry, A Magazine of Verse

ADELAIDE CRAPSEY

You whom Death wrung
That you might thus achieve
Crystalline drops of beauty,
Do not grieve
That from the sun-drenched purple places
They gathered you so soon . . .

Envy us not who may,
With withered faces,
Watch the gray night suspend a haggard moon.

Emmy Veronica Sanders
Poetry, A Magazine of Verse

THE GREAT EVENT

The trivial, the small,
  Make up our lives;
And yet there comes to all
  One great event
That lifts the veriest thrall
  Pre-eminent,—
Death, the imperative call
  That none survives!

Harper's Magazine *Clinton Scollard*

THE BOX OF GOD

BROKEN BIRD

O broken bird,
Whose whistling silver wings have known the lift
Of high mysterious hands, and the wild sweet music
Of big winds among the ultimate stars!—
The black-robed curés put your pagan Indian
Soul in their white man's House of God, to lay
Upon your pagan lips new songs, to swell
The chorus of amens and hallelujahs.
In simple faith and holy zeal, they flung
Aside the altar-tapestries, that you
Might know the splendor of God's handiwork,
The shining glory of His face. O eagle,
They brought you to a four-square box of God,
Crippled of pinion, clipped of soaring wing;
And they left you there to flutter against the bars
In futile flying, to beat against the gates,
To droop, to dream a little, and to die.

Ah, Joe Shing-ób—by the sagamores revered
As Spruce the Conjurer, by the black-priests dubbed
The Pagan Joe—how clearly I recall
Your conversion in the long-blade's House of God,
Your wonder when you faced its golden glories.
Don't you remember?—when first you sledged from out
The frozen Valley of the Sleepy-eye,
And hammered on the gates of Fort Brazeau—
To sing farewell to Ah-nah-qúod, the Cloud,
Sleeping, banked high with flowers, clothed in the pomp
Of white man's borrowed garments in the church?
Oh, how your heart, as a child's heart beating before
High wonder-workings, thrilled at the burial splendor!—
The coffin, shimmering-black as moonlit ice,

And gleaming in a ring of waxen tapers;
After the chant of death, the long black robes,
Blown by the wind and winding over the hills
With slow black songs to the marked-out-place-of-death;
The solemn feet that moved along the road
Behind the wagon-with-windows, the wagon-of-death,
With its jingling nickel harness, its dancing plumes.
Oh, the shining splendor of that burial march,
The round-eyed wonder of the village throng!
And oh, the fierce-hot hunger, the burning envy
That seared your soul when you beheld your friend
Achieve such high distinction from the black-robes!
And later, when the cavalcade of priests
Wound down from the fenced-in-ground, like a slow black worm
Crawling upon the snow—don't you recall?—
The meeting in the mission?—that night, your first,
In the white man's lodge of holy-medicine?
How clearly I can see your hesitant step
On the threshhold of the church; within the door
Your gasp of quick surprise, your breathless mouth;
Your eyes round-white before the glimmering taper,
The golden-filigreed censer, the altar hung
With red rosettes and velvet soft as an otter's
Pelt in the frost of autumn, with tinsel sparkling
Like cold blue stars above the frozen snows.
Oh, the blinding beauty of that House of God!—
Even the glittering bar at Jock McKay's,
Tinkling with goblets of fiery devil's-spit,
With dazzling vials and many-looking mirrors,
Seemed lead against the silver of the mission.

I hear again the chanting holy-men,
The agents of the white man's Mighty Spirit,
Making their talks with strong, smooth-moving tongues:

"Hear! Hear ye, men of a pagan faith!
Forsake the idols of the heathen fathers,
The too-many ghosts that walk upon the earth.
For there lie pain and sorrow, yea, and death!

"Hear! Hear ye, men of a pagan faith!
And grasp the friendly hands we offer you
In kindly fellowship, warm hands and tender,
Yea, hands that ever give and never take.
Forswear the demon-charms of medicine-men;
Shatter the drums of conjuring Chée-sah-kée—
Yea, beyond these walls lie bitterness and death!

"Pagans!—ye men of a bastard birth!—bend,
Bow ye, proud heads, before this hallowed shrine!
Break!—break ye the knee beneath this roof,
For within this house lives God! Abide ye here!
Here shall your eyes behold His wizardry;
Here shall ye find an everlasting peace."

Ah, Joe the pagan, son of a bastard people,
Child of a race of vanquished, outlawed children,
Small wonder that you drooped your weary head,
Blinding your eyes to the suns of elder days;
For hungry bellies look for new fat gods,
And heavy heads seek newer, softer pillows.
With you again I hear the eerie chants
Floating from out the primal yesterdays—
The low sweet song of the doctor's flute, the slow
Resonant boom of the basswood water-drum,
The far voice of the fathers, calling, calling.
I see again the struggle in your eyes—
The hunted soul of a wild young grouse, afraid,
Trembling beneath maternal wings, yet lured
By the shrill whistle of the wheeling hawk.
I see your shuffling limbs, hesitant, faltering
Along the aisle—the drag of old bronzed hands
Upon your moccasined feet, the forward tug
Of others, soft and white and very tender.

Of others, soft and white and very tender.
One forward step . . . another . . . a quick look back!—
Another step . . . another . . . and lo! the eyes
Flutter and droop before a flaming symbol,
The strong knees break before a blazoned altar
Glimmering its tapestries in the candle-light,
The high head beaten down and bending before
New wonder-working images of gold.

And thus the black-robes brought you into the house
Wherein they kept their God, a house of logs,
Square-hewn, and thirty feet by forty. They strove
To put before you food, and purple trappings—
Oh, how they walked you up and down in the vestry,
Proudly resplendent in your white man's raiment,
Glittering and gorgeous, the envy of your tribe:
Your stiff silk hat, your scarlet sash, your shoes
Shining and squeaking glorious with newness!
Yet even unto the end—those blood-stained nights
Of the sickness-on-the-lung; that bitter day
On the Barking Rock, when I packed you down from camp
At Split-hand Falls to the fort at Sleepy-eye;
While, drop by drop, your life went trickling out,
As sugar-sap that drips on the birch-bark bucket
And finally chills in the withered maple heart
At frozen dusk: even unto the end—
When the mission doctor, framed by guttering candles,
Hollowly tapped his hooked-horn finger here
And there upon your bony breast, like a wood-bird
Pecking and drumming on a rotten trunk—
Even unto this end I never knew
Which part of you was offering the holy prayers—
The chanting mouth, or the eyes that gazed beyond
The walls to a far land of windy valleys.
And sometimes, when your dry slow lips were moving
To perfumed psalms, I could almost, almost see
Your pagan soul aleap in the fire-light, naked,

Shaking the flat black earth with moccasined feet,
Dancing again—back among the jangling
Bells and the stamping legs of gnarled old men—
Back to the fathers calling, calling across
Dead winds from the dim gray years.

O high-flying eagle,
Whose soul, wheeling among the sinuous winds,
Has known the molten glory of the sun,
The utter calm of dusk, and in the evening
The lullabies of moonlit mountain waters!—
The black-priests locked you in their House of God,
Behind great gates swung tight against the frightened
Quivering aspens, whispering perturbed in council,
And muttering as they tapped with timid fists
Upon the doors and strove to follow you
And hold you; tight against the uneasy winds
Wailing among the balsams, fumbling upon
The latch with fretful fingers; tight against
The crowding stars who pressed their troubled faces
Against the windows. In honest faith and zeal,
The black-robes put you in a box of God,
To swell the broken chorus of amens
And hallelujahs; to flutter against the door,
Crippled of pinion, bruised of head; to beat
With futile flying against the gilded bars;
To droop, to dream a little, and to die.

II: WHISTLING WINGS

Shing-ób, companion of my old wild years
In the land of K'tchée-gah-mée, my good right arm
When we battled bloody-fisted in the storms
And snows with rotting scurvy, with hunger raw
And ravenous as the lusting tongues of wolves—
My Joe, no longer will the ghostly mountains
Echo your red-lunged laughters in the night;
The gone lone days when we communed with God
In the language of the waterfall and wind

Have vanished with your basswood water-drum.
Do you recall our cruise to Flute-reed Falls?
Our first together—oh, many moons ago—
Before the curés built the village mission?
How, banked against our camp-fire in the bush
Of sugar-maples, we smoked kin-ník-kin-ník,
And startled the sombre buttes with round raw songs,
With wails that mocked the lynx who cried all night
As if her splitting limbs were torn with pain
Of a terrible new litter? How we talked
Till dawn of the Indian's Kéetch-ie Má-ni-dó,
The Mighty Spirit, and of the white man's God?
Don't you remember dusk at Cold-spring Hollow?—
The beaver-pond at our feet, its ebony pool
Wrinkled with silver, placid, calm as death,
Save for the fitful chug of the frog that flopped
His yellow jowls upon the lily-pad,
And the quick wet slap of the tails of beaver hurrying
Homeward across the furrowing waters, laden
With cuttings of tender poplar . . . down in the swale
The hermit-thrush who spilled his rivulet
Of golden tones into the purple seas
Of gloam among the swamps . . . and in the East,
Serene against the sky—do you remember?—
Slumbering Mont du Père, shouldering its crags
Through the crumpled clouds, rose-flushed with after-
glow . . .
And dew-lidded dusk that slipped among the valleys
Soft as a blue wolf walking in thick wet moss.
How we changed our ribald song for simple talk! . . .

"My frie', Ah-déek, you ask-um plenty hard question:
Ugh! W'ere Kéetch-ie Má-ni-dó he live?
W'ere all dose Eenshun spirits walk and talk?
Me—I dunnò! . . . Mebbe . . . mebbe over here,
In beaver-pond, in t'rush, in gromping bullfrog;
Mebbe over dere, he's sleeping in dose mountain . . .

"Sh-sh-sh! . . . Look! . . . Over dere . . . look, my frien'!
On Mont du Père . . . he's moving little! . . . ain't? . . .
Under dose soft blue blanket she's falling down
On hill and valley! Somebody—somebody's dere! . . .
In dose hill of Mont du Père, sleeping . . . sleeping. . ."

And when the fingers of the sun, lingering,
Slipped gently from the marble brow of the glacier
Pillowed among the clouds, blue-veined and cool,
How, one by one, like lamps that flicker up
In a snow-bound hamlet in the valley, the stars
Lighted their candles mirrored in the waters . . .
And floating from the hills of Sleepy-eye,
Soft as the wings of dusty-millers flying,
The fitful syllables of the Baptism River
Mumbling among its caverns hollowly,
Shouldering its emerald sweep through cragged cascades
In a flood of wafted foam, fragile, flimsy
As luna-moths fluttering on a pool . . .

"Caribou, you hear dat? . . . somebody's dere! . . .
Ain't . . . in dose hills of Mont du Père . . . sleeping.
Sh-sh-sh! . . . You hear-um? . . . dose far 'way Flute-reed Fall? . . .
Somebody's dere in Mont du Père, sleeping . . .
Somebody he's in dere de whole night long . . .
And wile he's sleep, he's talking little . . . talking. . ."

Hush!—don't you hear K'tchée-gah-mée at midnight?—
That stretched far out from the banks of Otter-slide
To the dim wet rim of the world—North, East, West?—

The Big-water, calm, thick-flecked with the light of
stars
As the wind-riffled fur of silver fox in winter . . .
The shuffle of the sands in the lapsing tide . . .
The slow soft wash of waters on the pebbles . . .

"Sh-sh-sh! . . . Look, Ah-déek! . . . on K'tchée-gah-
mée! . . .
Somebody—somet'ing he's in dere . . . ain't? . . .
He's sleep w'ere black Big-water she's deep . . .
Ho! . . .
In morning he's jump up from hees bed and race
Wit' de wind; but tonight he's sleeping . . . rolling
little . . .
Dreaming about hees woman . . . rolling . . . sleep-
ing . . ."

And later—you recall?—beyond the peaks
That tusked the sky like fangs of a coyote snarling,
The full-blown mellow moon that floated up
Like a liquid-silver bubble from the waters,
Serenely, till she pricked her delicate film
On the slender splinter of a cloud, melted,
And trickled from the silver-dripping edges.
Oh, the splendor of that night! . . . The Twin-fox
stars
That loped across the pine-ridge . . . Red Ah-núng,
Blazing from out the cavern of the gloom
Like the smoldering coal in the eye of carcajou . . .
The star-dust in the valley of the sky,
Flittering like glow-worms in a reedy meadow!

"Somebody's dere . . . He's walk-um in dose
cloud . . .
Look! . . . You see-um? . . . He's mak'-um for
hees woman
De w'ile she sleep, dose t'ing she want-um most—
Blue dress for dancing! . . . You see, my
frien'? . . . ain't? . . .

He's t'rowing on de blanket of dose sky
Dose plenty-plenty handfuls of w'ite stars;
He's sewing on dose plenty teet' of elk,
Dose shiny looking-glass and plenty beads.
Somebody's dere . . . somet'ing he's in dere. . ."

The green moons went—and many many winters.
Yet we held together, Joe, until our day
Of falling leaves, like two split sticks of willow
Lashed tight with buckskin buried in the bark.
Do you recollect our last long cruise together,
To Hollow-bear, on our line of marten traps?—
When cold Pee-bóan, the Winter-maker, hurdling
The rim-rock ridge, shook out his snowy hair
Before him on the wind and heaped up the hollows?—
Flanked by the drifts, our lean-to of toboggans,
Our bed of pungent balsam, soft as down
From the bosom of a whistling swan in autumn . . .
Our steaming sledge-dogs buried in the snow-bank,
Nuzzling their snouts beneath their tented tails,
And dreaming of the paradise of dogs . . .
Our fire of pine-boughs licking up the snow,
And tilting at the shadows in the coulee . . .
And you, rolled warm among the beaver-pelts,
Forgetful of your sickness-on-the-lung,
Of the fever-pains and coughs that wracked your bones—
You, beating a war song on your drum,
And laughing as the scarlet-moccasined flames
Danced on the coals and bellowed up the sky.

Don't you remember? . . . the snowflakes drifting down
Thick as the falling petals of wild plums . . .
The clinker-ice and the scudding fluff of the whirlpool
Muffling the summer-mumblings of the brook . . .
The turbulent waterfall protesting against
Such early winter-sleep, like a little boy
Who struggles with the calamity of slumber,

Knuckling his laden lids and his tingling nose
With a pudgy fist, and fretfully flinging back
His snowy cover with his petulant fingers.
Out on the windy barrens restless bands
Of caribou, rumped up against the gale,
Suddenly breaking before the rabid blast,
Scampering off like tumbleweeds in a cyclone. . .
The low of bulls from the hills where worried moose,
Nibbling the willows, the wintergreens, the birches,
Were yarding up in the sheltering alder-thicket . . .
From the cedar wind-break, the bleat of calves wedged warm
Against the bellies of their drowsy cows . . .
And then the utter calm . . . the wide white drift
That lay upon the world as still and ghastly
As the winding-sheet of death . . . the sudden snap
Of a dry twig . . . the groan of sheeted rivers
Beating with naked hands upon the ice . . .
The brooding night . . . the crackle of cold skies . . .

"Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Look, my frien', . . . somebody's dere! . . .
Ain't? . . . over dere? . . . He's come from dose Land-of-Winter! . . .
Wit' quilt he's cover-um up dose baby mink,
Dose cub, dose wild arbutus, dose jump-up-Johnny . . .
He's keep hees chil'ens warm for long, long winter . . .
Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Somebody's dere on de w'ite savanne! . . .
Somebody's dere! . . . He's walk-um in de timber . . .
He's cover-um up hees chil'ens, soft . . . soft . . ."

And later, when your bird-claw fingers rippled
Over the holes of your cedar Bée-bee-gwún
Mellowly in a tender tune, how the stars,
Like little children trooping from their teepees,

Danced with their nimble feet across the sky
To the running-water music of your flute . . .
And how, with twinkling heels they scurried off
Before the Northern Light swaying, twisting,
Spiralling like a slender silver smoke
On the thin blue winds, and feeling out among
The frightened starry children of the sky . . .

"Look! . . . in de Land-of-Winter . . . somet'ing's dere! . . .
Somebody—he's reaching out hees hand! . . . for me! . . .
Ain't? . . . For me he's waiting . . . Somebody's dere! . . .
Somebody he's dere, waiting . . . waiting . . ."

Don't you remember?—the ghostly silence, splintered
At last by a fist that cracked the hoary birch,
By a swift black fist that shattered the brittle air,
Splitting it into a million frosty fragments . . .
And dreary Northwind, coughing in the snow,
Spitting among the glistening sheeted pines,
And moaning on the barrens among the bones
Of gaunt white tamaracks mournful and forlorn . . .

Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . My Caribou! . . . Somebody's dere! . . .
He's crying . . . little bit crazy in dose wind . . .
Ain't? . . . You heard-um? . . . far 'way . . . crying
Lak my old woman w'en she's lose de baby
And no can find-um—w'en she's running every-w'ere,
Falling in snow, talking little bit crazy,
Calling and crying for shees little boy . . .
Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Somet'ing's dere . . . you hear-um? . . . ain't? . . .
Somebody—somebody's dere, crying . . . crying . . ."

Then from the swale, where shadows pranced grotesquely
Solemn, like phantom puppets on a string,
A cry—pointed, brittle, perpendicular—
As startling as a thin stiff blade of ice
Laid swift and sharp on fever-burning flesh:
The tremulous wail of a lonely shivering wolf,
Piercing the world's great heart like an icy sword. . .

"Look! . . . Quick! . . . Ah-déek! . . . Somebody's dere! . . .
Ain't? . . . He's come—he's come for me—for me!
Me—me, I go! . . . . . My Caribou . . .
Dose fire—dose fire she's going out—she's cold . . .
T'row—t'row on dose knots of pine . . . Meegwétch! . . .
And pull 'way from dose flame—dose pan of sour-dough,
If you want eat—in de morning—damn-good flapjack . . .

"Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Somet'ing's dere! . . . You hear-um? . . . ain't? . . .
Somebody—somebody's dere, calling . . . calling . . .
I go . . . I go—me! . . . me . . . I go . . .".

III: TALKING WATERS

O eagle whose whistling wings have known the lift
Of high mysterious hands, and the wild sweet music
Of big winds among the ultimate stars,
The black-robes put you in a box of God,
Seeking in honest faith and holy zeal
To lay upon your lips new songs, to swell
The chorus of amens and hallelujahs.
O bundle of copper bones tossed in a hole,
Here in the place-of-death—God's fenced-in ground!—

Beneath these put-in pines and waxen lilies,
They placed you in a crimson gash in the hillside,
Here on a bluff above the Sleepy-eye,
Where the Baptism River, mumbling among the canyons,
Shoulders its flood through crooning waterfalls
In a mist of wafted foam fragile as petals
Of windflowers blowing across the green of April;
Where ghosts of wistful leaves go floating up
In the rustling blaze of autumn, like silver smokes
Slenderly twisting among the thin blue winds;
Here in the great gray arms of Mont du Père,
Where the shy arbutus, the mink, and the Johnny-jump-up
Huddle and whisper of a long, long winter;
Where stars, with soundless feet, come trooping up
To dance to the water-drums of white cascades—
Where stars, like little children, go singing down
The sky to the flute of the wind in the willow-tree—
Somebody—somebody's there . . . O pagan Joe . . .
Can't you see Him as He moves among the mountains—
Where dusk, dew-lidded, slips among the valleys
Soft as a blue wolf walking in thick wet moss?
Look! . . . my friend! . . . at the breast of Mont du Père! . . .
Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Don't you hear His talking waters . . .
Soft in the gloom as broken butterflies
Hovering above a somber pool . . . Sh-sh-sh-sh!
Somebody's there . . . in the heart of Mont du Père . . .
Somebody—somebody's there, sleeping . . . sleeping . . .

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Lew Sarett*

". . AS THE VIOLETS CAME"

Some love may come like a call to wars
  In a gale of glory that blinds and thrills;
But my love came like the breaking stars
  In a sudden hush on the summer hills.

Some love may come like a storm that swells
  In the August sky as the daylight wanes;
But my love came like the sound of bells
  The winds have drifted across the plains.

Some love may come like a flame that's drawn
  Through ruins crackling across the night;
But my love came like a breaking dawn
  On the daisy hills where the world is white.

For Love, as they say, may come like flame,
  Or a challenge gay, or a wind untrue;
But my love came as the violets came
  In the quiet fields when the spring was new.

Contemporary Verse *George Brandon Saul*

THE SHOP

The shop is red and crimson. Under the forge
  Men hold red bars of iron with black iron tongs.
It crashes —sparks spatter out; it crashes again, again.
  At last the iron is bent as it belongs.

Swedes, Norwegians, Poles or Greeks—they are men:
  They grin when they please, look ugly when they please;
They wear black oakum in their ears for the noise;
  They know their job, handle their tools with ease.

Their eyes are clean and white in their black faces;
If they like, they are surly, can speak an ugly no;
They laugh great blocks of mirth, their jokes are simple;
They know where they stand, which way they go.

If I wore overalls, lost my disguise
Of womanhood and youth, they would call me friend;
They would see I am one of them, and we could talk
And laugh together, and smoke at the day's end.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert
Poetry, A Magazine of Verse

TWO WOMEN

Two faint shadows of women were ascending
The pathway of a desolate hill,
Pale as moth-wings beneath the low-bending
Sycamore branches, in the moonlight paler still.

"This one is dead," said the moon; "her face is ashen,
She is dry as a withered leaf—
What has she known of beauty or of passion
To come by moonlight to the mountain of grief?"

"The other too is dead," said the earth, "yet her feet are burning—
I feel them hot and restless as blown fire.
She has known many paths, why is she turning
Here, from the secret valley of desire?"

They passed, the moon paled, and from leafy places
Morning crept forth. At last they came
From the mountain of grief—women with tear-wet faces
Who had been withered leaf and shadow of flame.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert
Poetry, A Magazine of Verse

NOCTURNE

The moonlit hill
And the black trees
Where a hidden bird
Sings and is still—
Even these
Leave me unstirred.

I am hidden deep,
Like the secret bough
Of a tree in leaf.
I am safe asleep—
What can touch me now
Of joy or grief?

For night and noon
The sky is shut,
The winds are dumb;
Behind the moon
No gates are cut
For the winds to come.

Could wind from the moon
Sweep down until,
Like a winter tree,
My leaves were strewn
On the moonlit hill
And I stood free,

Beauty and pain
Would touch me now
With bitter cold,
As moonbeams rain
Through a naked bough
When the year is old.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Goodmorning, madam, in your sleepy brown hair—
Twist yourself awake, blink and stare!
I am lying on the floor,
With the old rose-red
Dressing-gown you wore
When you went to bed.

Don't look stupid with drowsy blue eyes—
Here by the bed is your disguise!
You're a gentle wife
And a tender mother,
And all your life
You shall be no other.

Life is a shawl to wrap about your shoulder—
Every day warmer, every day older.
In half an hour
You'll be dressed,
Youth like a flower
Wilting on your breast.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert
Poetry, A Magazine of Verse

THERAPY

There is a way
Of healing love with love,
They say.
But I say no!
What! Shall pain comfort pain,
Fever cool fever,
Woe minister to woe?

Shall tear remembering,
Wash cool remembering tear?
Shall scar play host to scar,
Loneliness shelter loneliness,
And is forgetting here?

Poor patch-work of the heart,
This healing love with love,
Binding the wound to wound,
The smart to smart!
Grafting the dream upon the other dream,
As gardener grafts tree to tree,
And both from the same wild root
Bearing their bitter fruit;
The new dream dreaming in the old,
The old dream in the new. . . .
And neither dreaming true!

Beloved!
Is there a heaven
Above the heaven we knew—
So well—
Is there beneath our dream's awakening
A darker hell?
And shall we know them too?
One thing I know!
Of a vast giving that is a taking,
A wrong, a robbery!
Perhaps you so wronged me,
I so robbed you.

Therapy!
I am content to feel
This health of heart that will not heal;
I am content to think
That I am one with hunger,
Given to thirst,

And that I need not eat nor drink.
I am full-nourished so.

* * * * *

Beyond the wastes of wept-out woe
I see you still,
Holding toward me those tender hands
I could not fill;
My palms still curve and close,
Deeming they hoard
The shining things you poured
That I let spill.

Over us lift the years;
Hill upon hill
Of days that wither into night
And nights that ache to day . . .
Reiterated emptiness of shade and light
Crowding the emptier way.

Up to this high, sure therapy of time,
Beloved, shall we climb?

* * * * *

I know that I am tired: I would rather stay
Down in the shadows of our dear defeat—
Too still for invading grief, too deep—
A little while;
And sleep, as children sleep.
A little, little while!
Turn from my dreamlessness, and wake, and smile
Indifferent to the dark,
Holding to me my one-time joy,
As children clutch an ancient, battered toy
They will not have renewed;
Smile—and lie closer to a loss
That tunes itself to gain—
Inexorable lullaby—
Lie softer, safer,

Pillowed on pulseless fortitude,
Drowsy . . . .
Beneath my pain.

The Measure *Leonora Speyer*

THE PET

Hope gnawed at my heart like a hungry rat,
Ran in and out of my dreams high-walled,
I heard its scampering feet:
"Pretty rat—pretty rat—!" I called,
And crumbled it songs to eat.

Hope peeped at me from behind my dreams,
Nibbled the crumbs of my melodies,
Grew tame and sleek and fat;
Oh but my heart knew ease
To feel the teeth of my rat!

Then came a night—and then a day—
I heard soft feet that scuttled away—
Rats leave the sinking ship, they say.

The Bookman *Leonora Speyer*

TO A LITTLE XIITH CENTURY FIGURE OF THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST: THE CROSS MISSING

Where is your cross, poor homeless One? I see
  The piteous stretching of your hands and feet—
  This is the gesture, somber and complete,
In bloodless bronze, of your long agony.
And where the nails that held you to the tree?
  Here are the faint stigmata, cruel-sweet,
  And in my heart there sounds the hammer's beat:
O Son of God, be crucified in me!

Come, walk my Calvary of womanhood,
  Taste the wild hyssop of my hidden tear,
  Wear my gay crown and know my laughing spear,
Call Magdalene in purple to my rood:
  Hang, Christ that died for love, upon my pain,
  Between pale thieves, the dreams that dream in vain!

The Sonnet — *Leonora Speyer*

VICTORY

Day is the heart's red field,
And many an anguish there
Is lost or won,
And many a hope lies hopeless in the sun;
But night the conqueror kind,
Spreads its blessed treaty of the stars,
Where the heart's peace is signed.

Under the moon's white flag
I meet my ambushed dreams,
I see the foe—
Whom I have faced and put to flight, I know!—
Yielding his hosts to me;
And in strong, vanquished hands I lay
My weeping victory.

The Nation *Leonora Speyer*

MARY MAGDALENE

I think that Mary Magdalene
Was just a woman who went to dine,
And her jewels covered her empty heart
And her gown was the color of wine.

I think that Mary Magdalene
Sat by a stranger with shining head.
"Haven't we met somewhere?" she asked,
"Magdalene! Mary!" he said.

I think that Mary Magdalene
Fell at his feet and called his name;
Sat at his feet and wept her woe
And rose up clean of shame.

Nobody knew but Magdalene,
Mary, the woman who went to dine;
Nobody saw how he broke the bread
And poured for her peace the wine.

This is the story of Magdalene—
It isn't the tale the Apostles tell,
But I know the woman it happened to,
I know the woman well.

The Nation *Leonora Speyer*

MEASURE ME, SKY!

Measure me, sky!
Tell me I reach by a song
Nearer the stars:
I have been little so long!

Weigh me, high wind!
What will your wild scales record?
Profit of pain,
Joy by the weight of a word!

Horizon, reach out!
Catch at my hands, stretch me taut,
Rim of the world:
Widen my eyes by a thought!

Sky, be my depth,
Wind, be my width and my height,
World, my heart's span:
Loneliness, wings for my flight!

The Measure — *Leonora Speyer*

CORTÈGE FOR ROSENBLOOM

Now the wry Rosenbloom is dead
And his finical carriers tread,
On a hundred legs, the tread
Of the dead.
Rosenbloom is dead.

They carry the wizened one
Of the color of horn
To the sullen hill,
Treading a tread
In unison for the dead.

Rosenbloom is dead.
The tread of the carriers does not halt
On the hill, but turns
Up the sky.
They are bearing his body into the sky.

It is the infants of misanthropes
And the infants of nothingness
That tread
The wooden ascents
Of the ascending of the dead.

It is turbans they wear
And boots of fur
As they tread the boards
In a region of frost,
Viewing the frost.

To a chirr of gongs
And a chitter of cries
And the heavy thrum
Of the endless tread
That they tread.

To a jabber of doom
And a jumble of words
Of the intense poem
Of the strictest prose
Of Rosenbloom.

And they bury him there,
Body and soul,
In a place in the sky.
The lamentable tread!
Rosenbloom is dead.

The Measure — *Wallace Stevens*

TO JOSEPH SEVERN

For the Centenary of Keat's Death, 23 February, 1921

We who loved Keats will never long forget
Your memory, Severn: how your hand could trace
With tenderest art his dream-enshrouded face;
Could mould that moonlight-haunted brow, where met,
As in a fane on some Greek island set,
The beauty that transcends all time and place,
And the more winsome, earth-begotten grace
Of altar-flowers with limpid dew-drops wet.

But what you gave to Keats the man, your friend,
Has bound your name to his with dearer ties.
You soothed and shared his anguish at the end;
You heard the last cry of those passionate lips;
You last beheld those wonder-seeing eyes;
And watched the soul win free from Time's eclipse.

The Freeman — *Charles Wharton Stork*

THE ODD ONES

I like best those crotchety ones
  That follow their own way
In whimsical oblivion
  Of what the neighbors say.

They grow more rare as they grow old,
  Their lives show in their faces—
In little slants and twisted lines;
  Like trees in lonely places.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse — *Ruth Suckow*

GRAMPA SCHULER

Grampa Schuler, when he was young,
Had a crest of hair, and shining eyes.
He wore red-flowered waistcoats,
Wild Byronic ties.
The whole land of Germany
Wasn't wide enough!—
He ran away one night, when winter
Seas were fierce and rough.

He has a sleek farm here
With already a settled air.
He's patriarchal, with his sons
And daughters round him everywhere,
His son's son Jim has fiery eyes—
He wants to go where the land is new!
Grampa bitterly wonders: "What are
Young fools coming to!"

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Ruth Suckow*

BOYS AND GIRLS

The Sun-children:

Boys and girls, come out to play:
The sun is up, the wind's astray,
Early morning's gold is gone,
(They slumber on, they slumber on.)
I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do.
I will put kisses on your knees,
And we will squander as we please
This little, lazy, lovely day!

Ninety million miles away
The sun halloos: "Come out to play,
The winds are prancing on tip-toe
Impatient with long waiting so,
The hills look up. Come out, and oh,
Let your bodies dart and run
While I make shadows," says the sun.

Boys and girls, come out to play
Before the river runs away—
I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do. . . .

The Sun:

Boys and girls, come out to play
Before the river runs away.
While you are fluid, unafraid,
Beneath my light and shadow skim,
Before this folded gloom is dim
And limb no longer follows limb
Dancing under spotted shade.

For dancing were your bodies made!
Before the roses of you fade
Find your meaning for the mouth
While I lean south; while I go west,
Find your meaning for the rest.

The Sun-children:

Throw back your head and fly with me,
Love me, chase me, lie with me,
Follow, sweetheart of the sun,
Turn and follow where I run
Between blue vineyards and fruit-trees—
Fall down and kiss me on the knees!
Pant beside me while I pull
Berries for you from the full
Blue-jewelled branches. Crush them red
Not on your mouth—on mine instead!

The Sun:

Nimble you move, you are my own
My pliant essence. All alone,
On fire in the passive sky
I burn—a stone, a golden stone.
Together you in double shade
Discover why your limbs were made.

The Sun-child:

I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do.
Link your arms and loosen them,
Pluck and suck a grass's stem.
Touch my breasts with that blue aster,
Kiss me fast—I'll kiss you faster!
Link your arms and loosen them.

Now link your arms like mine together,
Toward me lightly, like a feather,
Dance. Like feathers you'll be blown
Across the level field alone,
And like a brown wing my bare feet
Will skim the meadow till we meet.

The river skips, but we are quicker:
Its little body's slender glisten
Goes down alley-ways of leaves.
Flicker, sun, and river, flicker;
Listen, lover, listen, listen
How the river laughs and grieves. . . .

I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do.
Leap for me, sweetheart, reach and try
To catch me, sweetheart; kiss and cry
After me, sweetheart, darting by.

After you seize me, we will lie,
I in the grass, you in the sky;
After you kiss me, we will start
To try and reach each other's heart,
And searching frantically find
The unseen blisses of the blind.

The Sun-children:

Before the river runs away,
Boys and girls, come out and play.
(They slumber on, they slumber on,
Morning's glint is almost gone.)
With yellow bubbles fill your veins
Before the lusty day-star wanes.
(They slumber on, they slumber on,
Silken leopard noon is gone.)
Die you may, die you must—
Fill your mouths with pollen dust;
Calyxes and honey thighs
Both will wither. Beauty dies.
Find out why mouths are berry-red
Before you stiffen in your drab bed.
Over you humming summer will glide,
You'll never lie languid on your side,
And listen then as you listen now
To half-heard melodies; oh, how
The river runs and runs and runs
Fluid with splendor, and the sun's
Circuit is singing. Fragile day!
Boys and girls, come out to play!

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Genevieve Taggard*

ICE AGE

Noiselessly the planets will blow by
Like smoke, like breath, like driven snow,
Frost-bitten suns on on, on on will blow,
Over earth's curve, the moons, like birds, will fly
Making no noise and only vague shadow.

And spider snow will spin and spin
A tangle of frost to snare earth in.

Little earth, then
Will house few men,
Little earth, shrunken,
No longer drunken
Purple, splendid, roistering earth;
Little earth hung
With pearls of seas,
Little earth shivering,
About to freeze.

And through her veins, caught in this web
Life and color and sound will ebb.

There will be faint tints, none
From the center of the sun.

There will be light noises, no
Sound harsher than snow.

Never a sound of thunder or river,
Torrent or stone,
Only vague breath from the old life-giver,
Making her own
Final, lingering filagree
Of frost blown
On the glass of the sky, in planet and tree
An icicle moon, a torrent and three

Glittering stars half-grown;
A slight tone
Rippling into the stilling river,
The crisp sea.

And spider snow will spin and spin
A tangle of cold to catch earth in.

Morning's red yawn,
Evening's pain,
Never will startle the earth, then,
Pure from her stain,
Earth's garments discarded and cleansed by the cold
clean hands of the rain.

A leaf's lines, and stem's tints,
Make in icy places, prints;

Trace of a foot, of a hooked claw
Settled to stone since the last thaw;

Minnows bent with wavering
Along a pool's ice edges cling.

All the beautiful, brave
Colors that curled in the wave
Flooding ground purple and crimsoning air
Are battered and rigid and bare.

Earth, bled of her sap,
Too stiff to unfold,
The sprouted mould
In the cleft of her lap;

While circles woven nearer now
Hang cold broodings on her brow.

Still, then crackling, once more still
Icy feet come up the hill.

Pushing back the granite fright
Men sing morning and sing night.

Only singing matters now
With stark birds on every bough.

Keeping back the loneliness
Men will swagger and caress,
And to dodge the fear of snow
Sing high and sing low.

Caroling for morning, caroling for noon,
Stiff tasks done with a tiny tune,
And never a note
In timbre any bigger than the tone of a flute,
Little sounds only coming in the throat,
And the big sounds mute.

Thinner, rarer and more shrill,
As silence whitens on the hill,
Whistling in daylight to keep up nerve,
While blue whiteness comes up the curve.

Bravado of sparse breath
Blown straight at death,
Voices in silences, swooping like birds,
Voices and caroling
Warm words. Flung at the sky's stiff stare
Into the brittle air
A laugh like a torch's flare. . . .

Desperate gaiety and games
And pleasantries for comfort like wan flames,
Will be their only way,
For in the midst of play—
Pause—a long sway,
Something faltering underneath,
The brief

Gasp of the breath, eye's blur,
Blunder of mortal fingers, words too thick to say,
Slight motions underneath the grey
Faces of cloud
And caroling, caroling, caroling loud,
To keep the cold away.

Some will slouch,
Lazy, brave,
Others crouch,
In a hidden cave,
Hearing near and hearing far,
Heavy steps from feet of stone,
Tread the warping fields alone,
Hearing far and hearing near
The wind's hiss in earth's ear,
Feel
Ground fall, and ground reel,
Brittle footsteps steal
Up the hill and down the cliff,
Touching, snapping, making stiff,
While granite footsteps, grinding numb
Up the little hollow come.

Not to give in
Men will go on
Trying to sin, making vague love, kissing wan
Faces. Trying to make
Children with women,
Trying to wake
Hints of old hunger, bitterly break
Flesh that turns marble-hard, trying to take
Life in their arms for their small comfort's sake.

Women will not move as move
Those confident of love.
Hurt like a torpid snake,
Agony drags and stirs but cannot wake.

So they will pass their days,
Fostering a child or two, giving names
Of half-remembered music, clamor, sound;
Over hunched shoulders peering round
For cold that creeping comes;
Over and over saying tropic words,
And calling babies after jungle birds.

They will be cheered with each new child,
And the wierd
Pall of the sky and the wild
Tangle of hooped moons piled
Like rubbish in the pallid west
Won't trouble them so much
With what they feared,
They'll touch
Cautiously their children and their lovers, clutch
Anything alive.

Not to give in
Men will go on,
Cold to the chin,
Light-stepping for fear
Feeling the thin
Ice of the air crack under the weight
Of feather-poised earth, and the near
Nuzzle of snow and the wind's spear.

Smoke from fire
And ice's smoke,
Lunge together,
Fight and choke,
Plunge and throttle and fight, and all
Blue smoke vanishes. Ashes fall.

Some will call the skimming planets, cranes
Going south for winter, nothing more,
And some will sow the icy fields with grains,
Search barren pools,
Harvest sea-weed, plant a pebble, or
Plough snow with patient tools.

And they will never cease to look for spring,
Climb endless hills,
And turn from east to west and west to east,
Imagining the least
Shreds of far color,
Supposing that they feel
Warmth on their faces, following the wheel,
Circling on its axis, search the sky
For sign of thaw, or rain or any change,
Looking for birds, where only dead stars fly
And calling snows and deepening snow-falls, strange.

In tightening silence, they will search for sound,
Beneath the smother of the sky,
Find tangled iron, as the first men found
Iron and more than mortal sinew in the ground.

And they will worship symbols of sure things,
Sure things, and tangible, cut clear,
Forgetting rust, they will keep iron near,
And try to pour into an iron mould,
The past's white fire perishing with cold.

And out of iron's touch upon their palms
Will come a song,
And they will seize stone hammers, make a clang,
Sing as they never sang,
Wild, assaulting, strong,
(Clang, cold, clang).
Stone on stone with iron bits
Clamped together *(Clang, clang),*
Iron twisted till it fits,
Notched and jammed and bolted fast,
Rearing heavily and slow
One monument against snow,
A monument to last, a tomb to hold
Yellow pollen of all past,
Against the cold.

Until at last comes twilight glimmer,
Voices, faces, motions dimmer,
Breath as low
As the all covering snow,
Even the evening and the morning laid
Cheek to cheek, will fade,
Radiance and sound made one,
And quieted and blended into none.

The Measure — *Genevieve Taggard*

WILD PLUM

They are unholy who are born
To love wild plum at night,
Who once have passed it on a road
Glimmering and white.

It is as though darkness had
Speech of silver words,
Or as though a cloud of stars
Perched like ghostly birds.

They are unpitied from their birth
And homeless in men's sight,
Who love better than the earth
Wild plum at night.

The New York Tribune — *Adul Tima*

THE DARK CUP

I

May

A delicate fabric of bird-song
Floats in the air,
The smell of wet wild earth
Is everywhere.

Red small leaves of the maple
  Are clenched like a hand,
Like girls at their first communion
  The pear trees stand.

Oh I must pass nothing by
  Without loving it much,
The rain drop try with my lips,
  The grass with my touch;

For how can I be sure
  I shall see again
The world on the first of May
  Shining after the rain?

II

"The Dreams of My Heart"

The dreams of my heart and my mind pass,
  Nothing stays with me long,
But I have had from a child
  The deep solace of song;
If that should ever leave me,
  Let me find death, and stay
With things whose tunes are played out and forgotten,
  Like the rain of yesterday.

III

Bells

At six o'clock of an autumn dusk
  With the sky in the west a rusty red,
The bells of the mission down in the valley
  Cry out that the day is dead.

The first star shines as sharp as steel—
  Why am I suddenly so cold?
Three bells, each with a separate sound,
  Clang in the valley, wearily tolled.

Bells in Venice, bells at sea,
Bells in the valley, heavy and slow—
There is no place over the crowded world
Where I can forget that the days go.

IV

In the End

All that could never be said,
All that could never be done,
Wait for us at last
Somewhere back of the sun.

All the heart broke to forego
Shall be ours without pain,
We shall take them as lightly as girls
Pluck flowers after rain.

And when we have found them at last,
Perhaps, after all,
The skies will not open for us,
Nor heaven be there at our call.

V

"A Little While"

A little while when I am gone
My life will live in music after me,
As spun foam lifted and borne on
After the wave is lost in the full sea.

Awhile these nights and days will burn
In song, with the frailty of foam,
Living in light before they turn
Back to the nothingness that is their home.

THE MYSTERY

Your eyes drink of me,
  Love makes them shine,
Your eyes that lean
  So close to mine.

We have long been lovers
  We know the range
Of each other's moods
  And how they change.

But when we look
  At each other so,
Then we feel
  How little we know.

The spirit eludes us,
  Timid and free—
Can I ever know you
  Or you know me?

Everybody's Magazine — *Sara Teasdale*

EFFIGY OF A NUN

(Sixteenth Century)

Infinite gentleness, infinite irony
  Are in this face with fast-sealed eyes,
And round this mouth that learned in loneliness
  How useless their wisdom is to the wise.

In her nun's habit carved, carefully, lovingly,
  By one who knew the ways of womenkind,
This woman's face still keeps in its cold wistful calm,
  All of the subtle pride of her mind.

These pale curved lips of hers holding their hidden
smile,
Show she had weighed the world; her will was set;
These long patrician hands clasping the crucifix
Once having made their choice, had no regret.

She was of those who hoard their own thoughts
lovingly,
Feeling them far too dear to give away,
Content to look at life with the high insolent
Air of an audience watching a play.

If she was curious, if she was passionate,
She must have told herself that love was great,
But that the lacking it might be as great a thing
If she held fast to it, challenging fate.

She who so loved herself and her own warring
thoughts,
Watching their humorous, tragic rebound,
In her thick habit's fold, sleeping, sleeping,
Is she amused at dreams she has found?

Infinite tenderness, infinite irony,
Hidden forever in her closed eyes,
That must have learned too well in their long lone-
liness
How empty their wisdom is even to the wise.

The Bookman *Sara Teasdale*

Nightingales and larks are found
Not everywhere: they can't go round.

Room enough and more there is,
Warblers, bluebirds, goldfinches.

Many a country would be dull
Should there be a cricket-lull.

Crickets, when the larks are flown,
Warm us with their undertone.

The Nation *Albert Edmund Trombly*

MATTER

When I was a live man,
  A few years ago,
For all I might say,
  For all I could do,

I got no attention;
  My life was so small
The world didn't know
  I was living at all.

Such stolid indifference
  I couldn't allow;
I swore that I'd matter,
  Never mind how.

But after a lifetime
  Of failure and prayer,
I broke my heart trying
  To make the world care.

And now as I lie here,
Feeding this tree,
I am more to the world
Than it is to me.

The Century Magazine *Louis Untermeyer*

SALUTE TO THE TREES

Many a tree is found in the wood
And every tree for its use is good:
Some for the strength of the gnarled root,
Some for the sweetness of flower or fruit;
Some for shelter against the storm,
And some to keep the hearth-stone warm;
Some for the roof, and some for the beam,
And some for a boat to breast the stream;—
In the wealth of the wood since the world began
The trees have offered their gifts to man.

But the glory of trees is more than their gifts:
'Tis a beautiful wonder of life that lifts,
From a wrinkled seed in an earth-bound clod,
A column, an arch in the temple of God,
A pillar of power, a dome of delight,
A shrine of song, and a joy of sight!
Their roots are the nurses of rivers in birth;
Their leaves are alive with the breath of the earth;
They shelter the dwellings of man; and they bend
O'er his grave with the look of a loving friend.

I have camped in the whispering forest of pines,
I have slept in the shadow of olives and vines;
In the knees of an oak, at the foot of a palm
I have found good rest and slumber's balm.
And now, when the morning gilds the boughs

Of the vaulted elm at the door of my house,
I open the window and make salute:
"God bless thy branches and feed thy root!
Thou has lived before, live after me,
Thou ancient, friendly, faithful tree."

Scribner's Magazine *Henry van Dyke*

OF A BEAUTIFUL POEM

(Three Voices)

I

Lifeblood and spirit-fire
  Went to its making:
Surely the Maker found
  (His for the taking)
All a kind word could show
  Of gracious living,
And happy stars could give,
  Lavishly giving—
Honor and easefulness,
  Wealth to buy leisure,
Beauty of man's device,
  Nature's high pleasure,
White moons to glorify
  Times of far roaming,
Orchards in bloom to make
  Sweet the home-coming

II

Lifeblood and spirit-fire
  Went to its making:
Surely the Maker found
  Naught for free taking.
It was a warring soul
  Flamed in such fashion,

Not from a heart at ease
  Bled this pure passion.
Honor he served the while
  Loud tongues decried him,
Beauty the more because
  Much was denied him;
Pan in the darkness laid
  Paths for his roaming,
Thorn-branch and rue were cut
  For his home-coming.

III

Lifeblood and spirit-fire
  Went to its making:
Who knows what planet ruled
  At its awaking?
Plenty may starve a soul,
  Dearth feed another,
Joy bring to one the gift
  Grief gives his brother;
One finds a Calvary
  In Eden-places,
One builds all beauty from
  Beauty's faint traces . . . .
Weal-star or bale-star may
  Pilot the roaming,
Yet will a singer's heart
  Sing at home-coming.

Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer
The North American Review

EVANESCENCE

Slowly I pass among the blowing flowers
Catching my breath at their beauty as I go;
Familiar sweetness drifts across the hours,
Keen, lovely sweetness intimate as woe.
Yet by tomorrow, all the roses blown
Will be a sea of crimson on the grass,
And the naked trees will shudder at the moan
Of glowing winds that wake them as they pass.
In such wise love will vanish as the night;
Each word of joy that you have sung to me
The years will silence with their dark delight
And the wild soaring after ecstasy
Will be a lyric bird that dares the sky
Only to fall to earth when storms beat by.

The Pagan — *Harold Vinal*

SONNET

I have touched hands with peace and loveliness,
When the first breath of May crept through the trees;
Watched lovely flowers tremble in the breeze—
I cannot say I have been comfortless.
Often the nights have whispered words to me;
With wonder I have watched a new day break,
Shaking its veils across a windy lake—
The wind that stirred them, brought me ecstasy.

My heart can know no pain while beauty weaves
Quaint patterns in the corridors of thought,
Patterns of curving cloud and waving leaves;
All the indifference that time has wrought
Will softly pass, when I behold afar—
The lovely beauty of an evening star.

The Granite Monthly — *Harold Vinal*

I SHOULD LIKE TO LIVE IN A BALLAD WORLD

I should like to live as a ballad maid
Who loves, is loved, and dies,
Or bears four sons as a matron staid
To her lord's amazed eyes.

Birth, and youth, and womanhood,
Ripe lips and golden hair,
Death and a lover understood,
And a black silk shroud to wear;

And all the long years left untold
The long hours left unsaid,
While swift, rare moments of life unfold
Bronze and silver and red.

I should like to live in a ballad world
While vivid lips of song
My leaping, lingering tale unfurled
Of a fate six stanzas long.

The Nation — *Eda Lou Walton*

INSANITY

My mind is dark with shadows of a sea
That creeps unheard across a barren sand
And breaks unheard in silence over me.

Yet,—smooth as any woman's breast is mine,
My limbs sweep slenderly in line,
My yearning arms, voluptuous and white
Encircle night.
He clasps me close and lays his cooling lips
Against my throat and curves his darkling form,

His cloud-streaked hair across my bosom slips
And down he broods in storm.
Passion is freed, he rages in desire,
His arms press lightning from me and I lie
Formless and loose about him, higher, higher,
He lashes me and drops me from the sky
To prostrate lands,
And there beside me stretches in the sands
While strange dew shines against his hair
And all hours long the paled moon creeps by
To watch us lying there.

My mind is dark, yet smoother is my breast
Than any other woman's,—I must rest,
Within these waters pain may slip from me,
My mind is dark with shadows of a sea.

The Measure *Eda Lou Walton*

GOSPEL WITH BANJO AND CHORUS

Dear ones, I have gambled, I have rolled the bones.
It's the truth, praise God!
Hell was open, waiting with its howls and moans.
There you are, praise God!
Heaven's gates were opening, up steps the Lamb,
"Sister, aren't you sick of sin?" "Yes," I said, "I am."
And it's the truth, praise God!
Sinner, aren't you going there, joining our procession—
Everybody holy, making loud profession?
And there you are, praise God!

Dear ones, I have wallowed belly-deep in sin.
It's the truth, praise God!
I'd looked into the puddle, devil shoved me in.
There you are, praise God!

Jesus came and saved me, gave me cleanly clothes:
"Sister, rise with Jesus!" and my spirit rose.
And it's the truth, praise God!
Sinner, aren't you going there? All the sky rejoices,
Everything is sounding with the heavenly voices.
And there you are, praise God!

Dear ones, drink's a serpent—it had me by the throat.
It's the truth, praise God!
Ever see a rattlesnake swallowed by a shote?
There you are, praise God!
Jesus came and grabbed me: "Sister, I declare!—
Devil's in your gizzard, you can spit him out in prayer."
And it's the truth, praise God!
Brother, aren't you going there? Streets are hung with banners,
Cherubim and seraphim bow and show their manners.
And there you are, praise God!

Dear ones, I was loose—Lord, Saturday night!
It's the truth, praise God!
Along would come a black man, along would come a white.
There you are, praise God!
Jesus came and chased them, drove them with a whip:
"Sister," says our Savior, "watch the devil skip!"
And it's the truth, praise God!
Lover, aren't you going there, risen from the lowly,
Justified and sanctified and glorified and holy?
And there you are, praise God!

Dear ones, it's the truth!
Truth of God, praise God!
Sinner, it's the truth, it's the truth, praise God!
Sister, it's the truth, truth of God, praise God!
Brother, it's the truth, it's the truth, praise God!
Lover, it's the truth, it's the truth, the truth!
Mourner, it's the truth, and there you are, praise God!

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Keene Wallis*

LEGEND

I wonder where it could of went to . . .
  I know I seen it just as plain:
A beautiful, big fairy city
  Shinin' through the rain.

Rain, it was, not snow—in winter!
  Special-order April weather
Ticklin' at our two faces
  Pressed up close together.

Not a single soul was near us
  Standin' out there on the bow;
When we passed another ferry
  He says, sudden, "Now!"

Then I looked where he was pointin' . . .
  I seen a magic city rise . . .
Gleamin' windows, like when fields is
  Full o' fireflies.

Towers and palaces up in the clouds, like . . .
  Real as real, but nice and blurred.
"Oh . . ." I starts in—but he whispers
  "Hush! Don't say a word!

"Don't look long, and don't ast questions;
  Elset you make the fairies sore . . .
They won't let you even see it
  Never any more.

"Don't you try to ever go there . . .
  It's to dream of, not to find.
Lovely things like that is always
  Mostly in your mind."

Somethin' made me say, "It's Jersey!"
Somethin' mean . . . He hollers, "Hell!
Now you done it, sure as shootin' . . .
Now you bust the spell!"

Sure enough, the towers and castles
Went like lightnin' outa sight. . . .
Nothin' there but filthy Jersey
On a drizzly night.

Vanity Fair *John V. A. Weaver*

CLIFFS

I took my longing up a cliff,
All alone, I looked on the sea—
The surf, spread out like fans of lace
Rustled a soft sound up to me,
A gentle sound like sliding beads,
And wind hummed over the weeds.

Long and long ago a cliff
Lovers out of luck would leap,
And fall to cool their hearts like stones,
Or break like waves and fall asleep.
The sea now is the same, I knew,
And any cliff, I thought, would do.

I laid down my frock and frills,
I took gold pins from my hair,
And tip-toed to the tasselled edge,
Whispering a prayer,
That nothing else of me but foam
Should remain to carry home.

I was a curve of flame in the air!
I was a coal that scorched the sea!
The spray went up in a steamy cloud,
High and hissing over me,
And my body slid out of the blue,
Polished and clean and new.

I shook the bitterness from my eyes,
I laughed that I was alive!
So now I know I can dare to love
As long as I love to dive
And I am not the one to weep,
While there are cliffs to leap.

The North American Review *Winifred Welles*

DIANA

I am always carving arrows
Or polishing my bow,
Yet why I care for hunting
I do not seem to know.

For they are long and lonely,
The ways of wood and hill,
And it is wearisome to seek,
And sorrowful to kill.

But I am always hoping,
I shall carry home some prize,
Like a white-feathered squirrel,
Or a fawn with blue eyes.

The Measure *Winifred Welles*

WOMEN AND ORCHARDS

An orchard in the valley,
  An orchard on the hill,
One has flowers yet to flaunt
  All in a lacy frill—
  One is bleak and still.

The apple trees were prudent
  And calm of bud and root,
For it's the careful blossom,
  The cool, reluctant shoot,
  That come to certain fruit.

Nearer to sky the peach trees,
  Breathless, every one,
Lifted high pink petals
  On tiptoe for a run
  Tingling to the sun—

Open-eyed and innocent,
  Their tenderness was tossed
All in a loving impulse
  For a rose kiss and lost
  Hideously in frost.

Say what you will for beauty
  That takes all spring to tell
How white it is—brief blossoms,
  That flamed before they fell,
  Were beautiful as well.

So some can taste fulfillment
  From a heavy valley tree,
While some climb up a hillside
  Black with scars to be
  Comforted—like me.

Contemporary Verse *Winifred Welles*

JEALOUSY

What? Did my spotted lily startle you?
Sorry—I never thought to warn. It's true
You come upon it rather suddenly
Out of that vacant, dingy hall. You see
I've lived with it and tended it so long,
I never seem to realize how strong
And harsh its colors are. In this back room
They fairly snarl and crackle through the gloom
Well, yes, a little sickish I admit.
I'll open up the window for a bit
And let a gust of lilacs in—There, now,
You watch him in the field while I tell how
I came to find it first.....
I guess you know
How much he likes to be alone, to go
Forever wand'ring off across the hill,
Or mooning 'round the ruins of the mill,
Or somewhere, anywhere it seems to be,
So long as he can get away from me.
But once—he was just opening the door—
I felt I couldn't bear it any more!
I snatched his hat and cried, "What right have you
Always to leave me so? I'm going too!"
And went.
There was a blurring kind of rain,
That soaked the world up in a slow, grey stain;
And mist like phlegm—You couldn't hear a sound
On any side, except the one the ground
Made, ogreishly sucking at our shoes.
I knew that low road was the one he'd choose
To plague me! So I led, and set a pace
Across the marsh that fairly made him race—
Although for all of road or roof or tree,
We might as well have stumbled undersea.
No wonder I stopped short and screamed out loud,
When that thing jabbed its hot fangs through the
cloud

Around our feet!
"It's just a flower," he said,
"A happy, lonely lily, warm and red."

I couldn't stand the way he kept so mild,
And spoke as if I were a fool or child.
"Pick it!" I cried, "If red can rise in mud,
And warmth in mist, there's hope for flesh and blood!"
He stared beyond the fog.....
"Oh let it stay,
A wild thing fades if you take it away."
I knew then what my man was thinking of,
His other wife—that Gypsy—his first love—
And growing sentimental with his past,
As if in spite of death, she were his last.
So I stooped down and clutched it in my hand,
Gasping as if it were a burning brand,
And tore it up, leaves, blossom, roots and all!
He never said a word, but straight and tall
Stalked slowly off, and like an oily screen,
The grey, unrolling film slid in between.
I waited 'til his footsteps in the mire
Smeared over too.
I hid my flower of fire
Beneath my coat, but even then it shone
Enough to light the long way home alone.
He said that it would fade. I made it thrive.
Close to the window pane it seemed alive
As her own face that used to hover there,
With eyes as black as dungeons under hair
Tawny and wild and bound with red. For hours
She'd watch that curve of road between the flowers.
She'd watch, but nothing came until the day
The hearse drove up to carry her away.
I liked my lily for awhile, but now
It's bloated, glow'ring, terrible—Somehow
It lived so easily, it grew too well.
I often fear it and the bloody spell
It seems to cast. Even the walls and floors

Are mottled with its shadow. Lock the doors
And blind the windows but I still can see
The flicker of its poison burn towards me.
And then that odor—almost as if slime
Could ooze along the air. Many a time
Those sluggish sweetnesses uncoil and creep
Upstairs to slink into my very sleep.....
I guess you're right—fancies like these are bad,
And apt to make folks think you're kind of mad.
But they're familiar ones to me, you know—
I plucked that lily twenty years ago.

Contemporary Verse *Winifred Welles*

IMPLACABLE BEAUTY

On the wide waste the web of twilight trembling,
Hangs low with stars and night,
The dying day, in the worn west dissembling,
Crowns his defeat with light.

Here by the sands and dunes my soul sinks crying,
By beauty stabbed to death—
"O in the dusk of the world let me too, dying,
Mingle with these my breath!"

There is no answer. In the cold heavens shining,
Star trembles unto star;
The virgin moon in the clear west declining
Hangs, like a scimitar.

Contemporary Verse *John Hall Wheelock*

THE POET TELLS OF HIS LOVE

How shall I sing of Her that is
  My life's long rapture and despair—
Sorrow eternal, Loveliness,
  To whom each heart-beat is a prayer.

Utterly, endlessly, alone
  Possessing me, yet unpossessed—
The dark, the drear Beloved One
  That takes the tribute of this breast.

Daemon disconsolate, in vain,
  In vain petitioned and implored,
How many a midnight of disdain
  Darkly and dreadfully adored.

Beauty, the virgin, evermore
  Out of these arms with laughter fled—
Vanished . . . a voice by slope and shore
  Haunting the world, Illusion dread!

Most secret Siren, on whose coast
  'Mid spray of perishing song are hurled
All desolate lovers, all the lost
  Soul and half-poets of the world!

Through sleepless nights and lonely days
  In tears and terror served and sought—
Light beyond light, the supreme Face
  That blinds the adoring eyes of Thought!

How long shall I sing of Her! Nay all,
  All song, all sorrow, all silence of
This desperate heart, that is Her thrall,
  Trembles and tries to tell my love.

Scribner's Magazine *John Hall Wheelock*

THE SORROWFUL MASQUERADE

Even as to a music, stately and sad,
The young girls' feet begin to move in a dance,
And curiously for joy shift and advance;
So to a mournful waltz, sombre and sweet;
All laughing things move with delighted feet,
So all things that draw light and laughing breath
Move to the mournful waltz of life and death.
Comedy is a girl dancing in time
To the tragic pipes, sorrowful and sublime;
And ever she laughs back, and as she skips
Mimics the mournful music with her lips;
Then for sheer anger at her own pretense
Sobs violently at her own vehemence,
And mocks her tears. But when the pipings sleep
She needs must cover up her face and weep.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *John Hall Wheelock*

PLAINT

Brief is Man's travail here and transitory
  His wrath that soon is spent,
  Brief his lament,
    Lifted in vain against the harsh decrees
    Of the high Destinies
  That move not to the measure of his woe:
  Even as snow
On sunny meadows, as a lover's story
  Told in an April twilight long ago,
    Brief is he even as these—
His little hour of tumult, or of glory—
    And to what end devised we may not guess,
  Considering, as we go

Toward the same shadows, bearing the same spark,
His vanity and empty nothingness.
Yet in the mighty Dark
Dear is the spirit; grievously we know
Earth has one burden more, one soul the less.

All's Well *John Hall Wheelock*

THE RETURN

In some far and lonely midnight
I shall arise as in a dream,
And part dark curtains on a strange room
Where mysterious candles gleam.

I shall open an unknown book
In that weird and wind-stirred place,
And come upon a poem
With a sad face.

I shall listen to my dead heart's cry
Faint through the years that are gone,
And I shall feel over my shoulder
The Silence looking on.

And very softly he will touch me,
And I shall turn toward the gloom;
He will take my arm and quietly
Lead me out of the room.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse *Oscar Williams*

THE GOLDEN FLEECE

I know that life is Jason,
And that beauty is the witch-maiden helping him.
I know that the soft, luminous night of stars
Is the golden fleece he is seeking.
I know that in the beginning
He sowed the boulders, the teeth of dead ages,
And the innumerable armored cities have arisen.
I know that he has thrown among them love and desire,
And they have warred and shall war with each other until the end.
And if you doubt the least word I have said,
Come out on the dark beach some strange summer night
And watch the huge quivering serpent of the ocean
Still coiled around the trunk of the tree of paradise.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse — *Oscar Williams*

CANOPUS

Up from the smooth dust of the road they turned.
The shivery spider cables spread a net
Across the climbing path that teased and burned
Their faces, which the dew-sprayed leaves left wet;
Defenseless cheeks were clawed by trespassing bramble
And vagabonding sumach. Their fingers met,
Anchors to steady each unsteady scramble.

Their nervous feet struck stones, that toppled over
The terraced outcrop, and, at last let loose,
Clattered to rest against stray tufts of clover.
Boughs broke off in their grasp, and were no use,
And underneath the brittle twigs snapped shrill.
At length the firmer sassafras and spruce
Gave hand-holds as they met the steeper hill.

"We'll rest." He wiped an arm across a brow
Fouled with the twitching spider-web, and leant
Against a low dead stump, steadying now
Her passage toward him, much as though he meant
To hold the pressure till her breathless face
Encountered his; then, suddenly continent,
He loosed her hand. She poised in the dark place,

Her heart pounding, gasping as though distressed.
She smoothed a dampened, restless strand of hair.
A smile colored her echoing words: "We'll rest.
It *is* steep." Then they sniffed the thinner air,
Sharply brought closer, as the conquered rise
Made clear that they at length had mounted where
There were no more of censoring city eyes.

The isolation was a sudden thrust
Cleaving them, like a whispered word of warning.
He brushed ahead; a startled smoke of dust
Trailed like a widening curtain. Quickly scorning
The stiff precipitous way, she followed higher
Through crushing shadow and jutting branch, adorning
This path that pointed toward an unseen fire.

Partly to dull two fires—the one that charred
Her cheeks, the one still deeper—she called out:
"You think we'll see it?" He was climbing hard,
So far ahead, his answer was a shout.
"I think we may." He waited, eyes uncertain,
Until her sky-lit face came near, to rout
The dark, as daybreak tears night's shadowy curtain.

He guided to the summit. Fingers tingled
Uneasily, driven thoughts clung and caressed;
The sharp throbs of their breathing met and mingled.
She sank in a grass cushion on the crest,
Content to forget far fire and its far arc.
She settled into a tender bladed nest,
His body lengthened upward in the dark,

Or so its seemed to her. "It's nearly ten;
An hour, and it should clear the horizon haze,
Squatting right above Sand Mountain. Then
It's ours, if the cloudy August heaven plays
No tricks." He held a tree-trunk close, instead
Of something longed for; she leaned in a daze,
Smoothing her knees as if it had been a head.

"A visitor," he thought aloud, "who takes
One burning, scornful look, and never more.
He leaves to flutter over Andean lakes,
To halve the sky of some lost, jungled shore,
To flame with the Southern Cross and Sirius,
Raining hot madness on lush midnight brakes,
Gilding chill seas, frigid, unamorous."

She pondered. "You have seen him?" "Once," he said,
"As I saw Mercury once, a golden bubble
Poised just above the dawn's disheveled bed,
For one pale glimpse." Her fingers clutched the stubble
Lying beneath them, clawed it from its home;
She held her voice level with much trouble.
"What are the stars but flecks of fiery foam—"

"What are the stars but sources of that flame
That burns and scorches in the stifling sun,
That flares in us—" His gesturing fingers came
Across hers suddenly, trembled, as if to run
In panic from a long suspected danger,
Then calmed into a hot oblivion,
Clasping her own, knowing her hand no stranger.

The night's mysterious wings pulsed through the dark,
The night's mysterious noises cracked and shivered,
And where their fingers met a visible spark
Seemed to leap forth at them, and pulsed and quivered

Throughout them both. Their thickened tongues were
dumb,
The pretty words of star-lore undelivered,
The pretty words that found no breath could come.

He sank into the stubble by her side,
Leaving a blankness in the upper night;
His lips leant in their urgency of pride
Towards her eyes, that made the blackness bright.
His lips spoke only to the reddened cheek,
And settled to a long-denied delight
Upon the goal they had not dared to seek.

There was a gasping silence on the crest,
While the wind whined and the thin stars passed over;
There was a gasping rapture in each breast,
And her will bent as wind bends low the clover.
And a flame rose to its magnificent noon,
And a flame vanished. Each exalted lover
Felt the mad ecstasy and the piercing tune

Of love higher than hills that brush the sky,
Of love fiercer than suns that whiten space,
Die in their high magnificence, yet die
To a still radiance in the friendly place
That seemed to promise higher ecstasy
Forever stamped on each beloved's face,
Telling them: "This is immortality."

Unseen, while love's proud beacon flared and swept
Across their hearts, a sudden sullen glow
Had lifted over the hill beyond, and crept,
Diminishing yet brightening, in slow
And stately curving path so high, and then
Bent back toward the dimness, slid below
The unlit bulk of the huge hills again.

Without a word they knew it. His face burning,
"We can return"; but they knew, at his word,
That there are paths that do not know returning;
And as their downward-stumbling footsteps stirred
The stony steep, the roadway dust, the gray
And morning hush, each rustle made or heard
Sang to them they had found the starrier way.

The Nation — *Clement Wood*

VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

Poetry, A Magazine of Verse — *Elinor Wylie*

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source,
And disembodied bones.

The New Republic — *Elinor Wylie*

BRONZE TRUMPETS AND SEA WATER

On Turning Latin Verse Into English Verse

Alembics turn to stranger things
Strange things: but never while we live
Shall magic turn this bronze that sings
To singing water in a sieve.

The trumpeteers of Caesar's guard
Salute his rigorous bastions
With ordered bruit: the bronze is hard
Though there is silver in the bronze.

Our mutable tongue is like the sea,
Curled wave, and shattering thunder-fit:
Dangle in strings of sand shall be
Who smooths the ripples out of it!

The New Republic — *Elinor Wylie*

THE TORTOISE IN ETERNITY

Within my house of patterned horn
I sleep in such a bed
As men may keep before they're born
And after they are dead.

Sticks and stones may break their bones,
And words may make them bleed:
There is not one of them who own
An armour to his need.

Tougher than hide or lozenged bark
Snow-storm and thunder proof,
And quick with sun and thick with dark
Is this my darling roof.

Their troubled dreams of death and birth
Pulse mother-o'-pearl to black:
I bear the rainbow bubble Earth
Square on my scornful back.

The New Republic *Elinor Wylie*

THE CHURCH-BELL

As I was lying in my bed
I heard the church-bell ring;
Before one solemn word was said
A bird began to sing.

I heard a dog begin to bark
And a bold crowing cock;
The bell, between the cold and dark,
Tolled. It was five o'clock.

The church-bell tolled, and the bird sang,
A clear true voice he had;
The cock crew, and the church-bell rang,
I knew it had gone mad.

A hand reached down from the dark skies,
It took the bell-rope thong,
The bell cried "Look! Lift up your eyes!"
The clapper shook to song.

The iron clapper laughed aloud,
Like clashing wind and wave;
The bell cried out "Be strong and proud!"
Then, with a shout, "Be brave!"

The rumbling of the market-carts,
The pounding of men's feet
Were drowned in song; "Lift up your hearts!"
The sound was loud and sweet.

Slow and slow the great bell swung,
It hung in the steeple mute:
And people tore its living tongue
Out by the very root.

The Nation — *Elinor Wylie*

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